THE YOUNG EMPEROR

WILLIAM II OF GERMANY

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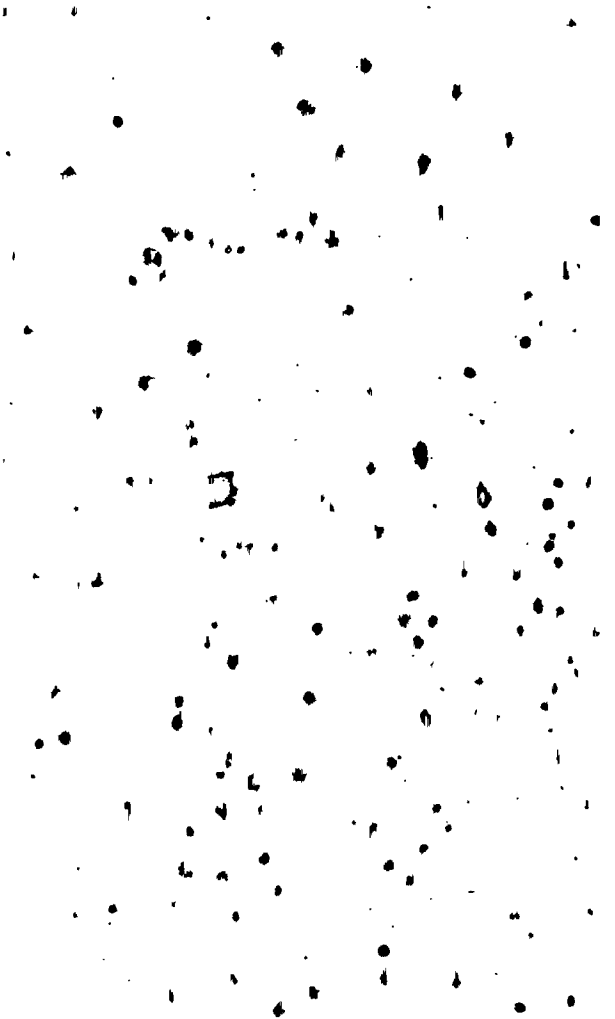

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A STUDY IN CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT ON A THRONE

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BY

HAROLD FREDERIC

Author of "In the Valley," "The Lawton Girl," &c., &c.

WITH PORTRAITS

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TO MY FRIEND

SPENSER WILKINSON

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THE YOUNG EMPEROR.

(WILLIAM II OF GERMANY.)

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CHAPTER I.

THE SUPREMACY OF THE HOHENZOLLERNS.

IN June of 1888, an army of workmen were toiling in the Champ de Mars upon the foundations of a noble World's Exhibition, planned to celebrate the centenary of the death by violence of the Divine Right of Kings. Four thousand miles westward, in the city of Chicago, some seven hundred delegates were assembled in National Convention, to select the twenty-third President of a great Republic, which also stood upon the threshold of its hundredth birthday. These were both suggestive facts, full of hopeful and inspiring thoughts to the serious mind. Considered together by themselves they seemed very eloquent proofs of the progress which Liberty, Enlightenment, the Rights of

Man, and other admirable abstractions spelled with capital letters, had made during the century.

But, unfortunately or otherwise, history will not take them by themselves. That same June of 1888 witnessed a spectacle of quite another sort in a third large city—a spectacle which gave the lie direct to everything that Paris and Chicago seemed to say. This sharp and clamorous note of contradiction came from Berlin, where a helmeted and crimson-cloaked young man, still in his thirtieth year, stood erect on a throne, surrounded by the bowing forms of twenty ruling sovereigns, and proclaimed, with the harsh, peremptory voice of a drill-sergeant, that he was a War Lord, a Mailed Hand of Providence, and a sovereign specially conceived, created, and invested with power by God, for the personal government of some fifty millions of people.

It is much to be feared that, in the ears of the muse of history, the resounding shrillness of this voice drowned alike the noise of the hammers on the banks of the Seine and the cheering of the delegates at Chicago.

Any man, standing on that throne in the White Saloon of the old Schloss at Berlin, would have to be a good deal considered by his fellow-creatures. Even if we put aside the tremendous international importance of the position of a German Emperor, in that gravely open question of peace or war, he

must compel attention as the visible embodiment of a fact, the existence of which those who like it least must still recognize. This is the fact: that the Hohenzollerns, having done many notable things in other times, have in our day revivified and popularized the monarchical idea, not only in Germany, but to a considerable extent elsewhere throughout Europe. It is too much to say, perhaps, that they have made it beloved in any quarter which was hostile before. But they have brought it to the front under new conditions, and secured for it admiring notice as the mainspring of a most efficient, exact, vigorous, and competent system of government. They have made an Empire with it—a magnificent modern machine, in which army and civil service and subsidiary federal administrations all move together like the wheels of a watch. Under the impulse of this idea they have not only brought governmental order out of the old-time chaos of German divisions and dissensions, but they have given their subjects a public service, which, taken all in all, is more effective and well-ordered than its equivalent produced by popular institutions in America, France, or England, and they have built up a fighting force for the protection of German frontiers which is at once the marvel and the terror of Europe.

Thus they have, as has been said, rescued the ancient and time-worn function of kingship from

the contempt and odium into which it had fallen during the first half of the century, and rendered it once more respectable in the eyes of a utilitarian world.

But it is not enough to be useful, diligent, and capable. If it were, the Orleans Princes might still be living in the Tuileries. A kingly race, to maintain or increase its strength, must appeal to the national imagination. The Hohenzollerns have been able to do this. The Prussian imagination is largely made up of appetite, and their Kings, however fatuous and limited of vision they may have been in other matters, have never lost sight of this fact. If we include the Great Elector, there have been ten of these Kings, and of the ten eight have made Prussia bigger than they found her. Sometimes the gain has been clutched out of the smoke and flame of battle; sometimes it has more closely resembled burglary, or bank embezzlement on a large scale; once or twice it has come in the form of gifts from interested neighbours, in which category, perhaps, the cession of Heligoland may be placed—but gain of some sort there has always been, save only in the reign of Frederic William IV and the melancholy three months of Frederic III.

That there should be a great affection for and pride in the Hohenzollerns in Prussia was natural enough. They typified the strength of beak, the

power of talons and sweeping wings, which had made Prussia what she was. But nothing save a very remarkable train of surprising events could have brought the rest of Germany to share this affection and pride.

The truth is, of course, that up to 1866 most other Germans disliked the Prussians thoroughly and vehemently, and decorated those head Prussians, the Hohenzollerns, with an extremity of antipathy. That brief war in Bohemia, with the consequent annexation of Hanover, Hesse-Cassel, Nassau, and Frankfort, did not inspire any new love for the Prussians anywhere, we may be sure, but it did open the eyes of other Germans to the fact that their sovereigns—Kings, Electors, Grand Dukes, and what not—were all collectively not worth the right arm of a single Hohenzollern.

It was a good deal to learn even this—and, turning over this revelation in their minds, the Germans by 1871 were in a mood to move almost abreast of Prussia in the apotheosis of the victor of Sedan and Paris. To the end of old William's life in 1888, there was always more or less of the apotheosis about the Germans' attitude toward him. He was never quite real to them in the sense that Leopold is real in Brussels or Humbert in Rome. The German imagination always saw him as he is portrayed in the fine fresco by Wislicenus in the ancient imperial palace at

Goslar—a majestic figure, clad in modern war trappings yet of mythical aspect, surrounded, it is true, by the effigies of recognizable living Kings, Queens, and Generals, but escorted also by heroic ancestral shades, as he rides forward out of the canvas. Close behind him rides his son, Fritz, and he, too, following in the immediate shadow of his father to the last, lives only now in pictures and in sad musing dreams of what might have been.

But William II—the young Kaiser and King—*is* a reality. He has won no battles. No antique legends wreathe their romantic mists about him. It has occurred to no artist to paint him on a palace wall, with the mailed shadows of mediæval Barbarossas and Conrads and Sigismunds overhead.

The group of helmeted warriors who cluster about those two mounted figures in the Goslar picture, and who, in the popular fancy, bring down to our own time some of the attributes of mediæval devotion and prowess—this group is dispersed now. Moltke, Prince Frederic Charles, Roon, Manteuffel, and many others are dead; Blumenthal is in dignified retirement; Bismarck is at Friedrichsruh. New men crowd the scene —clever organizers, bright and adroit parliamentarians, competent administrators, but still fashioned quite of our own clay—busy new men whom we may look at without hurting our eyes.

For the first time, therefore, it is possible to study this prodigious new Germany, its rulers and its people, in a practical way, without being either dazzled by the disproportionate brilliancy of a few individuals or drawn into side-paths after picturesque unrealities.

Three years of this new reign have shown us Germany by daylight instead of under the glamour and glare of camp fires and triumphal illuminations. We see now that the Hohenzollern stands out in the far front, and that the other German royalties, Wendish, Slavonic, heirs of Wittekind, portentously ancient barbaric dynasties of all sorts, are only vaguely discernible in the background. During the lifetime of the old Kaiser it seemed possible that their eclipse might be of only a temporary nature. Nowhere can such an idea be cherished now. Young William dwarfs them all by comparison even more strikingly than did his grandfather.

They all came to Berlin to do him homage at the opening of the Reichstag, which inaugurated his reign on June 25, 1888. They will never make so brave a show again; even then they twinkled like poor tallow dips beside the shining personality of their young Prussian chief.

Almost all of them are of royal lines older than that of the Hohenzollerns. Five of the principal

personages among them—the King of Saxony, the Regent representing Bavaria's crazy King, the heir-apparent representing the semi-crazy King of Würtemberg, the Grand Duke of Baden, and the Grand Duke of Hesse-Darmstadt—owe their titles in their present form to Napoleon, who paid their ancestors in this cheap coin for their wretched treason and cowardice in joining with him to crush and dismember Prussia. Now they are at the feet of Prussia, not indeed in the posture of conquered equals, but as liveried political subordinates. No such wiping out of sovereign authorities and emasculation of sovereign dignities has been seen before since Louis XI consolidated France 500 years ago. Let us glance at some of these vanishing royalties for a moment, that we may the better measure the altitude to which the Hohenzollern has climbed.

There was a long time during the last century when people looked upon Saxony as the most powerful and important State in the Protestant part of Germany. It is an Elector of Saxony who shines forth in history as Luther's best friend and resolute protector. For more than a hundred years thereafter Saxony led in the armed struggles of Protestantism to maintain itself against the leagued Catholic powers.

Then, in 1694, there ascended the electoral throne the cleverest and most showy man of the

whole Albertine family, who for nearly thirty years was to hold the admiring attention of Europe. We can see now that it was a purblind and debased Europe which believed August *der Starke* to be a great man; but in his own times there was no end to what he thought of himself or to what others thought of him. It was regarded as a superb stroke of policy when, in 1697, he got himself elected King of Poland—a promotion which inspired the jealous Elector of Brandenberg to proclaim himself King of Prussia four years later. August abjured Protestantism to obtain the Polish crown, and his descendants are Catholics to this day, though Saxony is strongly Protestant. August did many wonderful things in his time—made Dresden the superb city of palaces and museums it is, among other matters, and was the father of 354 natural children, as his own proud computation ran. A tremendous fellow, truly, who liked to be called the Louis XIV of Germany, and tried his best to live up to the ideal!

Contemporary observers would have laughed at the idea that Frederick William, the surly, bearish Prussian King, with his tobacco orgies and giant grenadiers, was worth considering beside the brilliant, luxurious, kingly August. Ah, "gay eupeptic son of Belial," where is thy dynasty now?

There is to-day a King of Saxony, descended six removes from this August, who is distinctly the most interesting and valuable of these minor sovereigns. He is a sagacious, prudent, soldierlike man, nominal ruler of over three millions of people, actual Field Marshal in the German Army which has a Hohenzollern for its head. Although he really did some of the best fighting which the Franco-German war called forth, nobody outside his own court and German military circles knows much about it, or cares particularly about him. The very fact of his rank prevents his generalship securing popular recognition. If he had been merely of noble birth, or even a commoner, the chances are that he would now be chief of the German General Staff instead of Count von Schlieffen. Being only a king, his merits as a commander are comprehended alone by experts.

There is just a bare possibility that this King Albert may be forced by circumstances out of his present obscurity. He is only sixty-three years old, and if a war should come within the next decade and involve defeat to the German Army in the field, there would be a strong effort made by the other subsidiary German sovereigns to bring him to the front as Generalissimo.

As it is, his advice upon military matters is listened to in Berlin more than is generally known, but in other respects his position is a melancholy

one. Even the kindliness with which the Kaisers have personally treated him since 1870, cannot but wear to him the annoying guise of patronage. He was a man of thirty-eight when his father, King John, was driven out of Dresden by Prussian troops, along with the royal family, and when for weeks it seemed probable that the whole kingdom of Saxony would be annexed to Prussia. Bismarck's failure to insist upon this was bitterly criticised in Berlin at the time, and Gustav Freytag actually wrote a book deprecating the further independent existence of Saxony. Freytag and the Prussians generally confessed their mistake after the young Saxon Crown Prince's splendid achievement at Sedan; but that could scarcely wipe from his memory what had gone before, and even now, after the lapse of a quarter century, King Albert's delicate, clear-cut, white-whiskered face still bears the impress of melancholy stamped on it by the humiliations of 1866.

Two other kings lurk much further back in the shadow of the Hohenzollern—idiotic Otto of Bavaria and silly Charles of Würtemberg. Of the former much has been written, by way of complement to the picturesque literature evoked by the tragedy of his strange brother Louis's death. In these two brothers the fantastic Wittelsbach blood, filtering down from the Middle Ages through strata of princely scrofula and

imperial luxury, clotted rankly in utter madness.

As for the King of Würtemberg, whose undignified experiences in the hands of foreign adventurers excited a year or two ago the wonderment and mirth of mankind, he also pays the grievous penalty of heredity's laws. Writing thirty years back, Carlyle commented in this fashion upon the royal house of Stuttgart: "There is something of the abstruse in all these Beutelsbachers, from Ulric downwards—a mute *ennui*, an inexorable obstinacy, a certain streak of natural gloom which no illumination can abolish; . . . articulate intellect defective: hence a strange, stiff perversity of conduct visible among them, often marring what wisdom they have. It is the royal stamp of Fate put upon these men—what are called fateful or fated men."[1] The present King Charles was personally an unknown quantity when this picture of his house was drawn. He is an old man now, and decidedly the most "abstruse" of his whole family.

Thus these two ancient dynasties of Southern Germany, which helped to make history for so many centuries, have come down into the mud. There is an elderly regent uncle in Bavaria who possesses sense and respectable abilities; and in

[1] "History of Friedrich II, of Prussia," book vii. chapter vi.

Würtemberg there is an heir-apparent of forty-three, the product of a marriage between first cousins, who is said to possess ordinary intelligence. These will in time succeed to the thrones which lunacy and asininity hold now in commission, but no one expects that they will do more than render commonplace what is now grotesquely impossible.

Of another line which was celebrated a thousand years ago, and which flared into martial prominence for a little in its dying days, when this century was young, nothing whatever is left. The Fighting Brunswickers are all gone.

They had a fair right to this name, had the Guelphs of the old homestead, for of the forty-five of them buried in the crypt of the Brunswick Burg Kirche nine fell on the battlefield. This direct line died out seven years ago with a curiously-original old Duke who bitterly resented the new order of things, and took many whimsical ways of showing his wrath. In the sense that he scorned to live in remodeled Germany, and defied Prussia by ostentatiously exhibiting his sympathy for the exiled Hanoverian house, he too may be said to have died fighting. The collateral Guelphs who survive in other lands are anything but fighters. The Prince of Wales is the foremost living male of the family, and Bismarck's acrid jeer that he was the only European Crown Prince whom one

did not occasionally meet on the battlefield, though unjustly cruel, serves to point the difference between his placid walk of life and the stormy careers of his mother's progenitors. Another Guelph, who is *de jure* heir to both Brunswick and Hanover—Ernest, Duke of Cumberland—has a larger strain of the ancestral Berserker blood, but alas! no weapon remains for him but obdurate sulkiness. He buries himself in his sullen retreat at Gmunden in uncompromising rage, and the powers at Berlin have left off striving to placate him with money—his relatives not even daring now to broach the subject to him.

And so there is an end to the Fighting Brunswickers, and a Hohenzollern has been put in their stead. Prince Albert of Prussia—a good, wooden, ceremonious man of large stature, who stands straight in jack boots and cuirass and is invaluable as an imposing family figure at christenings and funerals—reigns as Regent in Brunswick. So omnipotent are the Hohenzollerns grown that he was placed there without a murmur of protest—and when the time comes for the Prussian octopus to gather in this duchy, that also will be done in silence.

Of the sixteen remaining sovereigns-below-the-salt, the Grand Duke of Baden is a fairly-able and wholly-amiable man, much engrossed in these latter days in the fact that his wife is the Kaiser's

aunt. This makes him feel like one of the family, and he takes the aggrandizement of the Hohenzollerns as quite a personal compliment. The venerable Duke Ernest, of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, has an active mind and certain qualities which under other conditions might have made him a power in Germany. But Bismarck was far too rough an antagonist for him to cope with openly, and he fell into the feeble device of writing political pamphlets anonymously against the existing order of things, using the ingenuity of a jealous woman to circulate them and denying their authorship before he was accused. This has, of course, been fatal to his influence in the empire. Duke George, of Saxe-Meiningen, is another able and accomplished prince, who has devoted his energies and fortune to the establishment and perfecting of a very remarkable theatrical company. The rest are mere dead wood—presiding over dull little country Courts, wearing Prussian uniforms at parades and reviews, and desiring nothing else so much as the reception of invitations to visit Berlin and shine in the reflected radiance of the Hohenzollern's smile.

The word "invitations" does indeed suggest that the elderly Prince Henry XIV, of Reuss-Schleiz, should receive separate mention, as having but recently abandoned a determined feud with Prussia. It is true that Reuss-Schleiz has only

323 miles of territory and 110,000 people, but that did not prevent the feud being of an embittered, not to say menacing, character. When the invitations were sent out for the Berlin palace celebration of old Kaiser Wilhelm's ninetieth birthday, in 1887, by some accident Henry of Reuss-Schleiz was overlooked. There are so many of these Reusses, all named Henry, all descended from Henry the Fowler, and all standing so erect with pride that they bend backward! The mistake was discovered in a day or two and a belated invitation sent, which Henry grumblingly accepted. On the appointed day he arrived at the palace in Berlin and went up to the banqueting hall with the other princes. Being extremely near-sighted, he made a tour of the table, peering through his spectacles to discover his name-card. Horror of horrors! No place had been provided for him, and everybody in the room had observed him searching for one! Trembling with wrath, he stalked out, brushing aside the chamberlains who essayed to pacify him, and during that reign he never came to Berlin again. Not death itself could mollify him, for when Kaiser Wilhelm died the implacable Henry XIV, who personally owns most of his principality, refused his subjects a grant of land on which to rear a monument to his memory. But even he is reconciled to Berlin now.

Thus with practical completeness had the ancient dynasties of old Germany been subordinated to and absorbed by the ascendency of the Hohenzollerns, when young William II stepped upon the throne. Thus, too, with this passing glance at their abasement or annihilation, the way is cleared for us to study the young chief of this mighty and consolidated Empire, to examine his personality and his power, and, by tracing their growth during the first three years of his reign, to forecast their ultimate mark upon the history of his time.

From a photograph by HEINR. GRAF, *Berlin.*)

WILLIAM II. AS A BOY.

CHAPTER II.

WILLIAM'S BOYHOOD.

THE young Emperor was born in the first month of 1859. The prolonged life of his grandfather, and the apparently superb physical vitality of his father, made him seem much further removed from the throne than fate really intended, and he grew up into manhood with only scant attention from the general public. There was an unexpressed feeling that he belonged to the twentieth century, and that it would be time enough then to study him. When of a sudden the world learned that the stalwart middle-aged Crown Prince had a mortal malady, and saw that it was a race toward the grave between him and his venerable father, haste was made to repair this negligent error, and find out things about the hitherto unconsidered young man who was to be so prematurely called upon the stage. Unfortunately, this swift and un-

expected shifting of history's lime-light revealed young William in extremely repellent colours. Many circumstances, working together in the shadows behind the throne, had combined to put him into a temporary attitude toward his parents, which showed very badly under this sudden and fierce illumination. "Ho, ho! He is a bad son, then, is he?" we all said, and made up our minds to dislike him on the spot. Three years have passed, and during that time many things have happened, many other things have come to light, calculated to convince us that this early judgment was an over-hasty one.

So far as I have been able to learn, the first hint given to the world that there was a young Prince in Berlin distinctly worth watching appeared in the book "Sociétié de Berlin. Par le Comte Paul Vasili," published at the end of 1883. This volume was, perhaps, the cleverest of the anonymous series projected by a Parisian publisher to make money out of the collected gossip and scandal of the chief European capitals, and utilized by more than one bright familiar of Mme. Adam's *salon* to pay off old grudges and market afresh moss-grown libels. The authorship of these books was never clearly established. There is a general understanding in Berlin that the one about that city was for the most part written by a Parisian journalist named Gerard, then stationed

in Germany. At all events, the evidence was regarded at the time as sufficient as to warrant his being chased summarily out of Berlin, while the book itself was prohibited, confiscated, almost burned by the common hangman. Perhaps Gerard, if he be still alive, might profitably return to Berlin now, for to him belongs the credit of having first put into type an intelligent character study of the young man who now monopolizes European attention.

"The Prince William," said this anonymous writer, "is only twenty-four years of age. It is, therefore, difficult as yet to say what he will become; but what is clearly apparent even now is that he is a young man of promise in mind and head and heart. He is by far the most intellectual of the Princes of this royal family. Withal courageous, enterprising, ambitious, hot-headed, but with a heart of gold, sympathetic in the highest degree, impulsive, spirited, vivacious in character, and gifted with a talent for repartee in conversation which would almost make the listener doubt his being a German. He adores the army, by which he is idolized in return. He has known how, despite his extreme youth, to win popularity in all classes of society. He is highly educated, well read, busies his mind with projects for the welfare of his country, and has a striking keenness of perception for everything relating to politics.

"He will certainly be a distinguished man, and very probably a great sovereign. Prussia will perhaps have in him a second Frederic II, but minus his scepticism. In addition, he possesses a fund of gaiety and good humour that will soften the little angularities of character without which he would not be a true Hohenzollern.

"He will be essentially a personal king—never allowing himself to be blindly led, and ruling with sound and direct judgment, prompt decision, energy in action, and an unbending will. When he attains the throne, he will continue the work of his grandfather, and will as certainly undo that of his father, whatever it may have been. In him the enemies of Germany will have a formidable adversary; he may easily become the Henri IV of his country."

I have ventured upon this extended extract from a book eight years old because the prophecy seems a remarkable one—far nearer what we see now to be the truth than any of the later predictions have turned out to be. "Paul Vasili" continues his sketch with some paragraphs about the Prince's vast penchant for lower-class dissipated females, concluding with the warning that if ever he comes under the influence of a really able woman "it will be necessary to follow his actions with great caution." All this may be unhesitatingly put down to the French writer's imagination.

There is no city where more frankness about talking scandal exists than in Berlin, yet I have sought in vain to find any justification for this view of the Kaiser's character, either past or present. The impression brought from many talks with people who know him and his life intimately is that this special accusation is less true of him than of almost any other prince of his generation.

William's boyhood was marked by one innovation in the family traditions of a Hohenzollern's training, the importance of which it is not easy to exaggerate. His father had been the first of these royal heirs to be sent to a university. He in his turn was the first to go to a public school.

It is a solemn and portentous sort of thing—this training of a Hohenzollern. The progress of the family has been one long, sustained object lesson to the world on the value of education. No doubt it is in great part due to the influence of this standing example that Prussia leads the van of civilization in its proportion of scholars and teachers, and has made its name a synonym for all that is thorough and exhaustive in educational systems and theories. The dawn of this notion of a specially Spartan and severe practical schooling for his heir, in the primitive and curiously-limited brain of the first King Frederic William, really marked an era in the world's conception of what education meant.

We have all read, with swift-chasing mirth, wonder, incredulity and wrath, the stories of the way in which this luckless heir, afterward to be Frederic the Great, got his education stamped, beaten, burned, frozen, almost strangled into him. The account reads like a nightmare of lunatic savagery —yet in it were the germs of a lofty idea. From the brutal cudgeling, cursing, and manacling of Frederic's experience grew the tradition of a unique kind of training for a Hohenzollern prince. The very violence and wild barbarity of his treatment fixed the attention of the family upon the theory of education—with very notable results.

Historically we are all familiar with the excessive military twist given to this education of the youths born to be Kings of Prussia. The picture books are full of portraits of them—quaint little manikins dressed in officers' uniforms—stepping from the cradle into war's paraphernalia. The picture of the Great Fritz beating a drum at the age of three, of which the rapturous Carlyle makes so much, has its modern counterpart in the photographs of the present child Crown Prince, clad in regimentals and saluting the camera, which are in every Berlin shop window. But another element of this stern regimen, not so much kept in view, is the absolute dependence of the son upon the father, or rather the King, which is insisted upon.

We know to what abnormal lengths this ran in

the youth and early manhood of Frederic the Great. It did not alter much in the next reign. In 1784, when this same Frederic was seventy-two years old, a travelling French noble was his guest at a great review in Silesia. There was also present the King's nephew and heir, who two years later was to ascend the throne as Frederic William II, and who now was in his fortieth year. Yet of this forty-year-old Prince the Frenchman writes in his diary: "The heir presumptive lodges at a brewer's house, and in a very mean way; is not allowed to sleep from home without permission from the King."

The results in this particular instance were not of a flattering kind, and among the decaying forms of the dying eighteenth century—in an atmosphere poisoned by the accumulated putridities of that luxurious and evil epoch—even the Hohenzollern of the next generation was not a shining success. He was at least, however, much superior to the other German sovereigns of his time, and he had the unspeakable fortune, moreover, to be the husband of that Queen Louise who is enshrined as the patron saint of Prussian history. It was she who engrafted a humane spirit upon the rough drill-sergeant body of Hohenzollern education. She made her sons love her—and it seems but yesterday since the last of these sons, a tottering old man of ninety, used to go to the Charlotten-

burg mausoleum on the anniversary of her death, and pray and weep in solitude beside the recumbent marble effigy of the mother who had died in 1810.

The introduction of filial affection into the relation between Hohenzollern parents and children dates from this Queen Louise, and belongs to our own century. Before that it was the rule for the heirs of Prussia to detest their immediate progenitors. From the time of the Great Elector, every rising generation of this royal house sulked, cursed under its breath, went into opposition as far as it dared, and every fading generation disliked and distrusted those who were coming after it. Nor were these harsh relations confined to sovereign and heir. Wilhelmine, Margravine of Baireuth, records in her memoirs how, at the age of six, she was so much surprised at being fondled and caressed by her mother, on the latter's return from a prolonged journey, that she broke a blood-vessel.[1] It seems safe to say that down to the family of Frederic William III and Louise, no other reigning race in Europe had ever managed to engender so much bitterness and bad blood between elders and juniors within its domestic fold.

The change then was abrupt. The two older

[1] "Memoirs of Wilhelmine, Margravine of Baireuth," translated by H.R.H. Princess Christian, London, 1887, p. 10.

boys of this family, Frederic William IV and William I, lived lives as young men which were poems of filial reverence and tenderness. The cruel misfortunes of the Napoleonic wars made the mutual affection within this hunted and homeless royal family very sweet and touching. Perhaps the most interesting of all the reminiscences called forth by the death of the old Kaiser was furnished by the publication of the letters he wrote as a young man to his father—that strange correspondence which reveals him resolutely breaking his own heart and tearing from it the image of the Princess Radziwill, in loving obedience to his father's wish.

This trait of filial piety did not loom so largely in William's son, the late Frederic III, as one or two random allusions in his diary show. And in his son, in turn, its pulse beats with such varying and intermittent fervour that sometimes one misses it altogether.

Young William, as has been said, was the first of his race to be sent to a public school, the big gymnasium at Cassel being selected for the purpose. The innovation was credited at the time to the eccentric liberalizing notions of his mother, the English Crown Princess. The old Kaiser did not like the idea, and Bismarck vehemently opposed it, but the parents had their way, and at the age of fifteen the lad went, along with his

twelve-year-old brother Henry, and their tutor, Dr. Hinzpeter. They were lodged in an old schloss, which had been one of the Electoral residences, and out of school hours maintained a considerable seclusion. But in the school itself William was treated quite like any ordinary citizen's son.

It may have been a difficult matter for some of the teachers to act as if they were unconscious that this particular pupil was the heir of the Hohenzollerns, but men who were at the school at the time assure me they did so, with only one exception. This solitary flunkey, knowing that William was more backward in his Greek than most of his class, sought to curry favour with the Prince by warning him that the morrow's examination was to be, let us say, upon a certain chapter of Xenophon. The boy William received this hint in silence, but early the next morning went down to the classroom and wrote upon the blackboard in big letters the information he had received, so that he might have no advantage over his fellows. This struck me when I heard it as a curious illustration of the boy's character. There seems to have been no excited indignation at the meanness of the tutor—but only the manifestation of a towering personal and family pride, which would not allow him to win a prize through profiting by knowledge withheld from the others.

During his three years at Cassel William was very democratic in his intercourse with the other boys. He may have been helped to this by the fact that he was one of the worst-dressed boys in the school—in accordance with an ancient family rule which makes the Hohenzollern children wear out their old clothes in a way that would astonish the average grocer's progeny. He was only an ordinary scholar so far as his studies went. At that time his brother Henry, who went to a different school, was conspicuously the brighter pupil of the two. Those who were at Cassel with the future Emperor have the idea that he was contented there, but he himself, upon reflection, is convinced that he did not like it. At all events, he gathered there a very intimate knowledge of the gymnasium system which, as will be seen later on, he now greatly disapproves.

At the age of eighteen William left Cassel and entered upon his university course at Bonn. Here his tutor, Hinzpeter, who had been his daily companion and mentor from childhood, parted company with him, and the young Prince passed into the hands of soldiers and men of the world. The change marks an important epoch in the formation of his character.

There is a photograph of him belonging to the earlier part of this Cassel period which depicts a refined, gentle, dreamy-faced German boy, with a

soft, girlish chin, small arched lips with a suggestion of dimples at the corners, and fine meditative eyes. The forehead, though not broad, is of fair height and fulness. The dominant effect of the face is that of sweetness. Looking at it, one instinctively thinks "How fond that boy's parents must have been of him!" And they were fond in the extreme.

In the Crown Prince Frederic's diary, written while the German headquarters were at Versailles, are these words:—

"This is William's thirteenth birthday. May he grow up to be an able, honest, and upright man, a true German, prepared to continue without prejudice what has now been begun! Heaven be praised; between him and us there is a simple, hearty, and natural relationship, which we shall strive to preserve, so that he may thus always look upon us as his best and truest friends. It is really an oppressive reflection when one realizes what hopes have already been placed on the head of this child, and how great is our responsibility to the nation for his education, which family considerations and questions of rank, and the whole Court life at Berlin and other things will tend to make so much more difficult."

The retirement of Dr. Hinzpeter from his charge was an event the significance of which recent occurrences have helped us to appreciate. When history is called upon to make her final summing up upon William's character and career, she will allot a very prominent place to the influence of this relatively unknown man. A curious romance of time's revenge hangs about Dr. Hinzpeter. He is a native of the Westphalian manufacturing town, Bielefeld, and was a poor young tutor at Darmstadt when he was recommended to the

parents of William as one exceptionally fitted to take charge of their son. The man who gave this recommendation was the then Mr. Robert Morier, British Minister at Darmstadt. Nearly a quarter of a century later Sir Robert Morier was able to see his ancient and implacable enemy, Bismarck, tripped, thrown, and thrust out of power, and to sweeten the spectacle by reflecting that he owed this ideal vengeance to the work of the tutor he had befriended in the old Darmstadt days.

It is more than probable that the idea of sending the young Prince to the Cassel gymnasium originated with Dr. Hinzpeter. At all events, we know that he held advanced and even extreme views as to the necessity of emphasizing the popular side of the Hohenzollern tradition.

This Prussian family has always differed radically from its other German neighbours in professing to be solicitous for the poor people rather than for the nobility's privileges and claims. Sometimes this has sunk to be a profession merely; more often it has been an active guiding principle. The lives of the second and third Kings of Prussia are filled with the most astonishing details of vigilant, ceaseless intermeddling in the affairs of peasant farmers, artisans, and wage-earners generally, hearing complaints, spying out injustice, and roughly seeing wrongs righted. When Prussia grew too big to be thus paternally administered

by a King poking about on his rounds with a rattan and a taker of notes, the tradition still survived. We find traces of it all along down to our times in the legislation of the Diet in the direction of what is called State Socialism.

Dr. Hinzpeter felt the full inspiration of this tradition. He longed to make it more a reality in the mind of his princely pupil than it had ever been before. Thus it was that the lad was sent to Cassel, to sit on hard benches with the sons of simple citizens, and to get to know what the life of the people was like. Years afterwards this inspiration was to bear fruit.

But in 1877 the work of creating an ideally democratic and popular Hohenzollern was abruptly interrupted. Dr. Hinzpeter went back to Bielefeld, and young William entered the University of Bonn. The soft-faced, gentle-minded boy, still full of his mother's milk, his young mind sweetened and strengthened by the dreams of clemency, compassion, and earnest searchings after duty which he had imbibed from his teacher, suddenly found himself transplanted in new ground. The atmosphere was absolutely novel. Instead of being a boy among boys, he all at once found himself a prince amongst aristocratic toadies. In place of Hinzpeter, he had a military *aide* given him for principal companion, friend, and guide.

These next few years at the Rhenish university

did not, we see now, wholly efface what Dr. Hinzpeter had done. But they obscured and buried his work, and reared upon it a superstructure of another sort—a different kind of William, redolent of royal pretensions and youthful self-conceit, delighting in the rattle and clank of spurs and swords and dreaming of battlefields.

Poor Hinzpeter, in his Bielefeld retreat, could have had but small satisfaction in learning of the growth of the new William. The parents at Potsdam, too, who had built such loving hopes upon the tender and gracious promise of boyhood—they could not have been happy either.

CHAPTER III.

UNDER CHANGED INFLUENCES AT BONN.

THE act of matriculation at Bonn meant to young William many things apart from the beginning of a university career. In fact, it was almost a sign of his emancipation from academic studies. He was a student among students in only a formal sense. The theory of a complete civic education was respected by his attendance at certain lectures, and by his perfunctory compliance with sundry university regulations. But, in reality, he now belonged to the army. He had attained his majority, like other Prussian princes, at the age of eighteen, and thereupon had been given his Second Lieutenant's commission in the First Foot Regiment of the Guards, where his father had been trained before him. The routine of his military service, and the exigencies of the martial education which now supplanted all else, kept him much more in Berlin than at Bonn.

Both at the Prussian capital and Rhenish university town he now wore his uniform, his sword, and his epaulets, and, chin well in air, sniffed his fill of the incense burned before him by the young men of the army. The glitter and colour of the parade ground, the peremptory discipline, the sense of power given by these superb wheeling lines and walls of bayonets and exact geometrical movements as of some mighty machine, fascinated his imagination. He threw himself into military work with feverish eagerness. Pacific Cassel, with its gymnasium and the kindly figure of the tutor, Hinzpeter, faded away into a remote memory of childhood.

Public events, meanwhile, had been working out a condition of affairs which gave a marked importance to this change in William's character. The German peoples, having got over the first rapt enthusiasm at beholding their ancient Frankish enemy rolled in the dust at their feet, and at finding themselves once more all together under an imperial German flag, began to devote attention to domestic politics. It was high time that they did so.

Prussia had roared as gently as any sucking dove the while the question was still one of enticing the smaller German States into the federated empire. But once the Emperor-King felt his footing secure upon the imperial throne, the old

hungry Hohenzollern blood began stirring in his veins. His great Chancellor, Prince Bismarck, needed no prompting; every fibre of his bulky frame responded intuitively to this inborn Prussian instinct of aggrandisement. Together these two began putting the screws upon the minor States. "Solidifying the Empire" was what they called their work. The Hohenzollerns were always notable "solidifiers," as their neighbours have had frequent occasion to observe tearfully during the last three centuries.

The humiliation and expulsion of Austria had been the pivot upon which the creation of the new Germany turned. In its most obvious aspect this had appeared to all men to be the triumph of a Protestant over a Catholic power. Later events had contributed to associate Prussia's ascendency with the religious issue. The great Œcumenical Council at Rome had been followed by a French declaration of war, which every good Lutheran confidently ascribed to the dictation of the Jesuits.

These things grouped themselves together in the public mind just as similar arguments did in England in the days of the Armada. To be a Catholic grew to seem synonymous with being a sympathizer with Austria and France. It is an old law of human action that if you persistently impute certain views to a man, and persecute him on account of them, the effect is to reconcile his

mind to those views. The melancholy history of theologico-political quarrels is peculiarly filled with examples of this. The Catholics of Germany were in the main as loyal to the idea of imperial unity as their Protestant neighbours, and they had shed their blood quite as freely to establish it as a fact. Their bishops and priests had over and over again testified by deeds their independence of Rome in matters which affected them as Germans. But when they found Bismarck ceaselessly insisting that they were hostile to Prussia, it was natural enough that they should discover that they did dislike his kind of a Prussia, and that some of the least cautious among them should say so.

Prussia's answer—coming with the promptness of deliberate preparation—was the *Kulturkampf*. Into the miserable chaos which followed we need not go. Bishops were exiled or imprisoned; schools were broken up and Catholic professors chased from the universities; a thousand parishes were bereft of their priests; the whole empire was filled with angry suspicions, recriminations, and violence, hot-tempered roughness on one side, grim obstinacy of hate on the other—to the joy of all Germany's enemies outside and the confusion of all her friends.

Despotism begets lawlessness, and Bismarck and old William, busy with their priest hunt, suddenly discovered that out of this disorder had

somehow sprouted a strange new thing called Socialism. They halted briefly to stamp this evil growth out—and lo! from an upper window of the beer house on Unter den Linden, called the Three Ravens, the Socialist Nobiling fired two charges of buckshot into the head and shoulders of the aged Emperor, riddling his helmet like a sieve and laying him on a sick bed for the ensuing six months.

As a consequence, the Crown Prince Frederic was installed as Regent from June till December of 1878, and from this period dates young William's public attitude of antagonism to the policy of his parents.

For the present we need examine this only in its outer and political phases. It is too much, perhaps, to say that heretofore there had been no divisions inside the Hohenzollern family. The Crown Prince and his English wife had been in tacit opposition to the Kaiser-Chancellor *régime* for many years. But this opposition took on palpable form and substance during the Regency of 1878.

A new Pope—the present Leo XIII—had been elected only a few months before, and with him the Regent Frederic opened a personal correspondence, with a view to compromising the unhappy religious wrangles which were doing such injury to Germany. The letters written from

Berlin were models of gentle firmness and wise statesmanship, and they laid a foundation of conciliatory understanding upon which Bismarck afterward gladly reared his superstructure of partial settlement when the time came for him to need and bargain for the Clerical vote in the Reichstag. But at the time their friendly tone gave grave offence to the Prussian Protestants, and was peculiarly repugnant to the Junker court circles of Berlin.

It is no pleasant task to picture to one's self the grief and chagrin with which the Regent and his wife must have noted that their elder son ranged himself among their foes. The change which had been wrought in him during the year in the regiment and at Bonn revealed itself now in open and unmistakable fashion. Prince William ostentatiously joined himself with those who criticised the Regent. He assiduously cultivated the friendship of the men who led hostile attacks upon his parents. He had his greatest pride in being known for a staunch supporter of Bismarck, a firm believer in divine right, Protestant supremacy, and all the other catchwords of the absolutist party. The praises which these reactionary people sang in his honour mounted like the fumes of spirits to his young brain. Instinctively he began posing as the Hope of the Monarchy—as the providential young Prince, handsome, wise and strong, who was in

good time to ascend the throne and gloriously undo all that the weak dreamer, his father, had done toward liberalizing the institutions of Prussia and Germany.

A lamentable and odious attitude this, truly! Yet, which of us was wholly wise at nineteen? And which of us, it may be added fairly, has encountered such magnificent and overpowering temptations to foolishness as these that beset young William?

Remember that all his associates, alike in his daily routine with his regiment or at the University and in his larger intercourse among the aristocratic social circles of Berlin, took only one view of this subject. At their head were Bismarck, the most powerful and impressive personality in Europe, and the aged Emperor, the one furiously inveighing against the manner in which the Protestant religion and political security were being endangered, the other deploring from his sick-bed the grievous inroads which were threatened upon the personal rights and prerogatives of the Hohenzollerns. It is not strange that young William adopted the opinion of his grandfather and of Bismarck, chiming as it did with the new impulses of militarism that had risen so strongly within him, and being re-echoed, as it was, from the lips of all his friends.

But the event of this brief Regency which most

clearly marked the chasm separating the Crown Prince from the Junker circles of his son's adoption, was the appointment of Dr. Friedberg to high office. And this is particularly worth studying, because its effects are still felt in German social and political life.

Dr. Friedberg was then a man of sixty-five, and one of the most distinguished jurists of Germany. He had adorned a responsible post in the Ministry of Justice for over twenty years, and had written numerous valuable works, those relating to his special subject of prison reform and the efficacy of criminal law in social improvement standing in the very front rank of literature of that kind. His promotion, however, had been hopelessly blocked by two considerations; he was professedly a Liberal in politics and a close friend of the Crown Prince and Princess, and, what was still worse, he was a Jew.

On the second day of his Regency, Frederic astounded and scandalized aristocratic Berlin by appointing Dr. Friedberg to the highest judicial-administrative post in the kingdom. To glance forward for a moment, it may be noted that when old Kaiser Wilhelm returned to active power in December, he refused to remove Friedberg, out of a feeling of loyalty to his son's actions as Regent. But he vented his wrath in another way by conspicuously neglecting to give Friedberg the Black

Eagle after he had served nine years in the Ministry, though all his associates obtained the decoration upon only six years' service. This slight upon the Hebrew Minister explains the well-remembered action of Frederic, when he was on his journey home from San Remo to ascend the throne after his father's death:—as the Ministerial delegation met his train at Leipsic, and entered the carriage, he took the Black Eagle from his own neck and placed it about that of Friedberg.

This action of the emotional sick man, returning through the March snowstorm to play his brief part of phantom Kaiser, created much talk in Germany three years ago, and Friedberg, upon the strength of it, plumed himself greatly as the chief friend of the new monarch. He was the first Jew ever decorated by that exalted and exclusive Black Eagle—and during the short reign of ninety-nine days he held himself like the foremost man in the Empire.

It is a melancholy reflection that this mean-spirited old man, as soon as Frederic died, made haste to lend himself to the work of blackening his benefactor's memory. He had owed more to Frederic's friendship and loyalty than any other in Germany, and he requited the debt to the dead Kaiser with such base ingratitude that even Frederic's enemies were disgusted, and, under the

pressure of general disfavour, he had soon to quit his post. But enough of Friedberg's unpleasant personality. Let us return to 1878.

The Regent's action in giving Prussia a Jewish Minister lent an enormous original impulse to the anti-Semitic movement in Berlin, which soon grew into a veritable *Judenhetze*. This Jewish question, while it ran its course of excitement in Germany, completely dwarfed the earlier clerical issue, just as it in turn has been submerged by the rising tide of Socialistic agitation. But though the anti-Semitic party has ceased to exert any power at the polls the feeling back of it is still a potent factor in Berlin life.

In the new Berlin, of which I shall speak presently, the Jews occupy a more commanding and dominant position than they have ever had in any other important city since the fall of Jerusalem. For this the Germans have themselves largely to blame. The military bent of the ascendant Prussians has warped the whole Teutonic mind toward unduly glorifying the army. The prizes of German upper-class life are all of a military sort. Every nobleman's son, every bright boy in the wealthier citizens' stratum, aspires to the uniform. The tacit rule which excludes the Jews from positions in this epauletted aristocracy drives them into the other professions. They may not wear the sword: they revenge themselves by

owning the vast bulk of the newspapers, by writing most of the books, by almost monopolizing law, medicine, banking, architecture, engineering, and the more intellectual branches of the civil service.

This preponderance of Hebrews in the liberal professions seems unnatural to the Tory German, who has vainly tried to break it down by political action and by social ostracism. These attempts in turn have thrown the Jews into opposition. Of the seven Israelites in the present Reichstag six are Socialist Democrats and one is a Freisinnige leader. Every paper in Germany owned or edited by a Jew is uncompromisingly Radical in its politics. This in turn further exasperates the German Tories, and keeps alive the latent fires of hatred which bigots like Stöcker from time to time fan into flame.

In finance, too, the German aristocrats find themselves getting more and more helplessly into Jewish hands. Their wonderful new city of Berlin not only acts as a sieve for the great wave of Hebrew migration steadily moving westward from Russia, but it is becoming the Jewish banking and money centre of Europe. The grain trade of Russia is concentrated in Berlin. To buy wheat from Odessa you apply to one of the three hundred Jewish middleman firms at Berlin. To borrow money in Europe you go with equal certainty to Berlin. The German nobleman was never very

rich; he has of late years become distinctly poor —and all the mortgages which mar his sleep o' nights are locked in Jewish safes at Berlin.

To revenge himself the German aristocrat can only assume an added contempt for literature and the peaceful professions generally because they are Jewish; insist more strongly than ever that the army is the only place for German gentlemen because it is not Jewish, and dream of the time when a beneficent fate shall once more hand Jerusalem over to conquest and rapine.

This German nobleman, however, does not disdain in the meanwhile to lend himself to the spoliation of the loathed tribes when chance offers itself. There is a famous Jewish banker in Berlin, who, in his senile years, is weak enough to desire social position for his children. One of his sons, a stupid and debauched youngster, is permitted to associate with sundry fashionable German officers —just up to the point where he loses his money to them with sufficient regularity—and, of course, never gets an inch beyond that point.

A daughter of this old banker had an even more disastrous experience. She was an ugly girl, but with her enormous dower the ambitious parents were able to buy a titled husband in the person of a penniless German Baron. Delighted with this success, the banker settled upon the couple a handsome estate in Silesia. The Baron and his

bride were provided with a special train to convey them to their future home, and in that very train the Baron installed his mistress, and with her a lawyer friend who had already arranged for the sale of the estate. The Jewish bride arrived in Silesia to find herself contemptuously deserted by her husband and robbed of her estate. She returned to Berlin, obtained a divorce, and as soon as might be was married again—this time to a diamond merchant of her own race.

As for the Baron who perpetrated this unspeakably brutal and callous outrage, I did not learn that he had lost caste among his friends by the exploit. Indeed, the story was told to me as a merry joke on the Jews.

Prince Bismarck, almost alone among the Junker group, did not associate himself with this anti-Semitic agitation. In the work which he was carrying forward Jewish bankers were extremely useful. Both in a visibly regular way, and by subterranean means, capitalists like Bleichröder played a most important part in his performance of the task of centralizing power at Berlin. Hence he always held aloof from the movement against the Jews, and on occasions made his dislike for it manifest.

Doubtless it was his counsel which restrained the impetuous young William from openly identifying himself with this bigoted and proscriptive

demonstration. At all events, the youthful Prince avoided any overt sign of his sympathy with the anti-Jewish outcry, yet continued to find all his friends among the class which supported the *Judenhetze*. It seems a curious fact now that in those days he created the impression of a silent and reserved young man—almost taciturn. As to where his likes and dislikes lay, no uncertainty existed. He was heart and soul with the aristocratic Court party and against all the tendencies and theories of the small academic group attached to his father. He made this obvious enough by his choice of associations, but kept a dignified curb on his tongue.

In addition to his course of studies at Bonn and his practical labours with his regiment, the Prince devoted a set amount of time each week to instruction of a less common order. He had regular weekly appointments with two very distinguished professors—the Emperor William, who spoke on Kingcraft, and Chancellor Bismarck, whose theme was Statecraft. The former series of discourses was continued almost without intermission, even during the old Kaiser's period of retirement after Nobiling's attempt on his life. The Prince saw these eminent instructors regularly, but it did not enter into their scheme of education that he should profess to learn anything from his father.

Among the ideas which the impressionable young man imbibed from Bismarck there could be nothing calculated to increase his filial affection or respect. Bismarck had cherished a bitter dislike for the English Crown Princess, conceived even before her marriage, at a time when she represented to him only the girlish embodiment of an impolitic matrimonial alliance, and strengthened year by year after she came to Berlin to live. He did not scruple to charge to a conspiracy between her and the Empress Augusta all the political obstacles which from time to time blocked his path. He not only believed, but openly declared, that the Crown Princess was responsible for the whole Arnim episode; and it is an open secret that even the State papers emanating from the German Foreign Office during his Chancellorship contain the grossest and most insulting allusions to her. As for the Crown Prince, Bismarck was at no pains to conceal his contempt for one of whom he habitually thought as a henpecked husband.

Enough of this feeling about his parents must have filtered through into young William's mind, from his intercourse with the powerful Chancellor, to render any reassertion of parental influence impossible.

In the summer of 1880 the Emperor and his Chancellor decided that it was time for their

pupil to marry, and they selected for his bride an amiable, robust and comely-faced German princess of the dispossessed Schleswig-Holstein family. I gain no information anywhere as to William's parents having been more than formally consulted in this matter—and no hint that William himself took any deep personal interest in the transaction. The marriage ceremony came in February of 1881, and William was now installed in a residence of his own—the pretty little Marble Palace at Potsdam. His daily life remained otherwise unaltered. He worked hard at his military and civil tasks, and continued to pose—not at all through mere levity of character, but inspired by a genuine, if misguided, sense of duty—as the darling of all reactionary elements in modern Germany.

CHAPTER IV.

THE TIDINGS OF FREDERIC'S DOOM.

Six years of married and semi-independent life went by, and left Prince William of Prussia but little changed. He worked diligently up through the grades of military training and responsibility, fulfilling all the public duties of his position with exactness, but showing no inclination to create a separate *rôle* in the State for himself. The young men of the German upper and middle classes, alive with the new spirit of absolutism and lust for conquest with which boyish memories of 1870 imbued their minds, looked toward him and spoke of him as their leader that was to be when their generation should come into its own—but that seemed something an indefinite way ahead. He could afford to wait silently.

His summer home at Marmorpalais, charmingly situated on the shore of the Heiligen Sea at Pots-

dam, did not in any obvious sense become a political centre. The men who came to it were chiefly hard-working officers, and the talk of their scant leisure, over wine and cigars, was of military tasks, hunting experiences, and personal gossip rather than of graver matters. The library, which was William's workroom in these days, has most of its walls covered with racks arranged to hold maps, presumably for strategic studies and *Kriegspiel* work. The next most important piece of furniture in the room is a tall cabinet for cigars. The bookcase is much smaller.

When winter came Prince William and his family returned to their apartments in the Schloss at Berlin. Nurses clad in the picturesque Wendish dress of the Spreewald bore an increasing prominent part in this annual exodus from Potsdam—for almost every year brought its new male Hohenzollern.

Thus the early spring of 1887 found William, now past his twenty-eighth year, a major, commanding a battalion of Foot guards, the father of four handsome, sturdy boys, and two lives removed from the throne.

Then came, without warning, one of those terrible, world-changing moments wherein destiny reveals her face to the awed beholder—moments about which the imagination of the outside public lingers with curiosity forever unsatisfied. No

one will ever tell what happens in that soul-trying instant of time, We shall never know, for example, just what William felt and thought one March day in 1887, when somebody—identity unknown to us as well—whispered in his ear that the Crown Prince, his father, had a cancer in the throat.

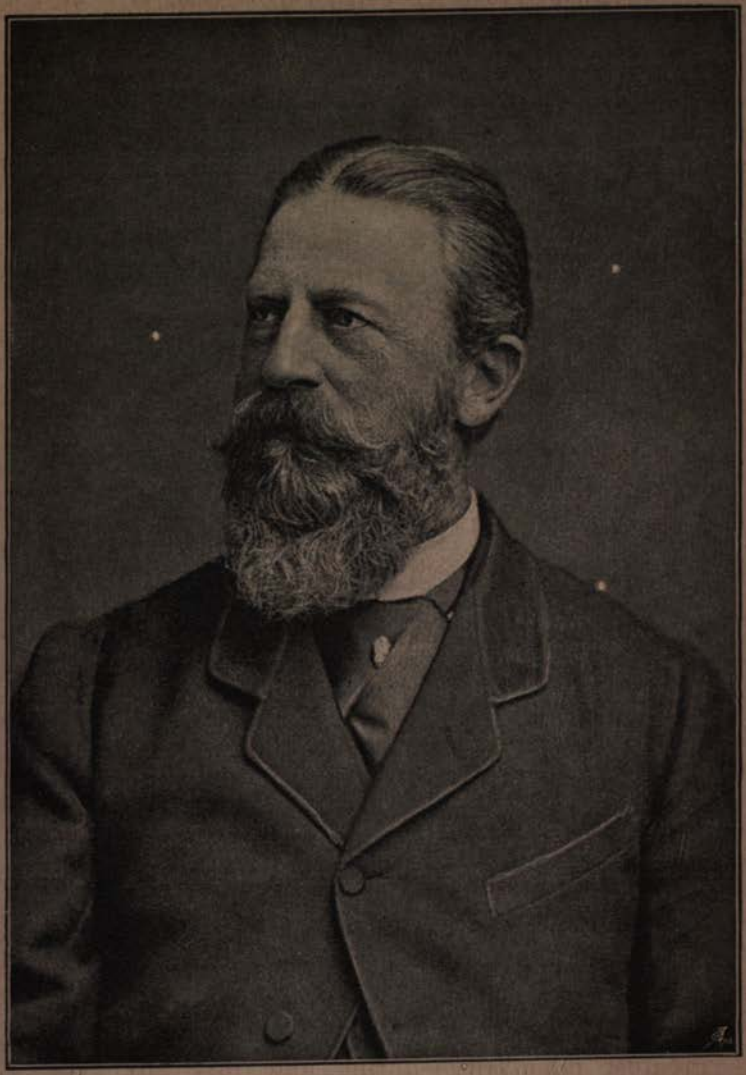
The world heard this sinister news some weeks later, and was so grieved at the intelligence that for over a year thereafter it fostered the hope of its falsity, and was even grateful to courtier physicians and interested flatterers who encouraged this hope. Civilization had elected Frederic to a place among its heroes, and clung despairingly to the belief that his life might, after all, be saved.

But in the inner family circle of the Hohenzollerns there was from the first no illusion on this point. The old Emperor and his Chancellor and the Prince William knew that the malady was cancerous. Their information came from Ems, whither Frederic went upon medical advice in the spring of 1887, to be treated for "a bad cold with bronchial complications." Later a strenuous and determined attempt was made to represent the disease as something else, and out of this grew one of the most painful and cruel domestic tragedies known to history. At this point it is enough to say that the Emperor and his grandson knew about the cancer before even rumours of it reached

the general public, and that their belief in its fatal character remained unshaken throughout.

To comprehend fully and fairly what followed, it will be necessary to try to look at Frederic through the eyes of the Court party. The view of him which we of England and America take has been, beyond doubt, of great and lasting service to the human race—in much the same sense that the world has been benefited by the idealized purities and sweetnesses of the Arthurian legend. We are helped by our heroes in this practical, work-a-day, modern world as truly as were our pagan fathers who followed the sons of Woden. Every one of us is the richer and stronger for this image of Frederic the Noble which the English-speaking peoples have erected in their Valhalla.

But it is fair to reflect, on the other hand, that this fine, handsome, able, and good-hearted Prince could not have created for himself such hosts of hostile critics in his own country, could not have continually found himself year by year losing his hold upon even the minority of his fellow-countrymen, without reason. It is certain that in 1886—the year before his illness befell—he had come to a minimum of usefulness, influence, and popularity in the Empire. Deplore this as we may, it would be unintelligent to refuse to inquire into its causes.



(*From a photograph by* FRANZ HANFSTAENGL, *München.*)

FREDERIC III.

Moreover, we are engaged upon the study of a living man, holding a great position, possibly destined to do great things. All our thoughts of this living man are instinctively coloured by prejudices based upon his relations with his father, who is dead. Justice to William demands that we shall strive fairly to get at the opinions and feelings which swayed him and his advisers in their attitude of antagonism to our hero, his father.

His critics say that Frederic was an actor. They do not insist upon his insincerity—in fact, for the most part credit him with honesty and candour—but regard him as the victim of hereditary histrionism. His mother, the late Empress Augusta, had always impressed Berliners in the same way—as playing in the *rôle* of an exiled Princess, with her little property Court accessories, her little tea-party circle of imitation French *littérateurs*, and her "Mrs. Haller" sighs and headshakings over the coarseness and cruelty of the big roaring world outside. And her grandfather was that play-actor gone mad, Czar Paul of Russia, who tore the passion so into tatters that his own sons rose and killed him.

Once given the key to this view of Frederic's character, a strange cloud of corroborative witnesses are at hand. Take one example. Most of the pictures of him drawn at the period of his greatest popularity—during and just after the

Franco-German war—pourtray him with a long-bowled porcelain pipe in his hand. The artists in the field made much of this: every war correspondent wrote about it. The effect upon the public mind was that of a kindly, unostentatious, pipe-loving burgher—and so lasting was it that when, seventeen years later, he was attacked by cancer, many good people hastened to ascribe it to excessive smoking. I had this same notion, too, and therefore was vastly surprised, in Berlin, years after, when a General Staff officer told me that Frederic rather disliked tobacco. I instanced the familiar pictures of him with his pipe. The instant reply was: "Ah, yes, that was like him. He always carried a pipe about at headquarters to produce an impression of comradeship on the soldiers, although it often made him sick."

It was hard work to credit this theory—until it was confirmed by a passage in Sir Morell Mackenzie's book. In response to the physician's question, Frederic said the report of his being a great smoker was "quite untrue, and that for many years he had hardly smoked at all." He added that probably this report, coming from soldiers who had seen him sometimes solacing himself after a hard-fought battle with a pipe, had given him his "perfectly undeserved reputation" as a devotee of tobacco.[1]

[1] "The Fatal Illness of Frederic the Noble," p. 20.

But the most striking illustrations of this trait, which Germans suspected in Frederic, are given in Gustav Freytag's interesting book, "The Crown Prince and the Imperial Crown." It may be said in passing that even among Conservatives in Berlin there is a feeling that Freytag should not have published this book. No doubt it tells the truth, but then Freytag owed very much to the tender friendship and liking of Frederic, who conspicuously favoured him above other German writers, and wrote kindly things about him in his diary—and, if the truth had to be told, some other than Freytag should have told it. Coupled as it is in the public mind with Dr. Friedberg's desertion, heretofore spoken of, this behaviour of another of the dead Prince's friends is felt to help justify the low opinion of German gratitude held among scoffing neighbours. As a Berlin official said in comment to the writer: "When men like Friedberg and Freytag do these things to the memory of their dead patron, it is no wonder that foreigners call us Prussians a pack of wolves, ready always to leap upon and devour any comrade who is down."

Freytag was the foremost correspondent attached to Frederic's headquarters in 1870–71, and enjoyed the confidence of the Crown Prince in extraordinary measure. Thus he is able to give us a detailed picture of the man's moods and mental

workings, day by day, during that eventful time. And this picture is a perfect panorama of varying phases of histrionism.

The Crown Prince was sedulously cultivating the popular impression of himself as a plain, hail-fellow-well-met, friendly Prince. But Freytag says: "The traditional conception of rank and position dwelt ineradicably in his soul; when he had occasion to remember his own claims, he stood more vehemently on his dignity than others of his class. . . . Had destiny allowed him a real reign, this peculiarity would probably have shown itself in a manner unpleasantly surprising to his contemporaries." [1]

More important still is this remark on the following page: "The idea of the German Empire grew out of princely pride in his soul; it became an ardent wish, and I think he was the originator and motive power of this innovation."

The fact that it was Frederic who conceived the idea of the Empire first came to the world when Dr. Geffcken printed that famous portion of the Crown Prince's diary which led to prosecutions and infinite scandal. Freytag's subsequent publication surrounds the fact with most curious minutiæ of detail.

As early as August 1st, before his Third Army

[1] "The Crown Prince and the German Imperial Crown," by Gustav Freytag, p. 27.

had even crossed the Rhine, Frederic had broached the idea of an empire, with Prussia at its head. All through the campaign which followed his head was full of it. He busied his mind with questions of titles, precedence, &c., to grow out of the new creation. One afternoon—August 11th—he strolled on the hillside with Freytag for a talk. "He had put on his general's cloak so that it fell around his tall figure like a king's mantle, and had thrown around his neck the gold chain of the Hohenzollern order, which he was not wont to wear in the quiet of the camp—and paced elated along the village green. Filled with the importance which the emperor idea had for him, he evidently adapted his external appearance to the conversation." During this talk he asked what the new title of the King of Prussia should be, and the anti-imperialist Freytag suggested Duke of Germany. Then "the Crown Prince broke out with emphasis, his eyes flashing: 'No! he must be Emperor!'"[1]

To create this empire Frederic was quite ready to forcibly coerce the Southern German States. Bismarck and William I., whom we think of as rough, hard, arbitrary men, shrank from even considering such a course. To the enthusiastic and slightly unreal Frederic it seemed the most natural thing in the world. The account in his diary of the long interview of Nov. 16, 1870, with

[1] Freytag, p. 20.

Bismarck makes all this curiously clear. "What about the South Germans? Would you threaten them, then?" asks the Chancellor. "Yes, indeed!" answers our ideal constitutional Frederic, with a light heart. The interview was protracted and stormy, Bismarck ending it by resort to his accustomed trick of threatening to resign, a well-worn device which twenty years later was to be used just once too often.

In this same diary, under date of the following March (1871), Frederic writes: "I doubt whether the necessary uprightness exists for the free development of the Empire, and think that only a new epoch, which shall one day come to terms with me, will see that. . . . More especially I shall be the first Prince who has to appear before his people after having honourably declared for constitutional methods without any reserve."

One feels that these two passages from his own diary—the utterances of November and the reflections of March—show distinctly why the practical rulers, soldiers, and statesmen of Prussia distrusted Frederic. They saw him more eager and strenuous about grasping the imperial dignity than any one else—willing even to break treaties and force Bavaria, Saxony, and Würtemberg into the empire at the cannon's mouth, and then they heard him lamenting that until he came to the throne there would not be enough "uprightness" to insure

(*From a photograph by* ELLIOTT & FRY, 55, *Baker Street, London, W.*)

THE EMPRESS FREDERIC.

"constitutional methods." Candidly, it is impossible to wonder at their failure to reconcile the two.

An even more acute reason for this suspicion and dislike lay in Frederic's relations with the English Court. To begin with, there was a sensational and fantastic uxoriousness about his attitude toward his wife which could not command sympathy in Germany. Freytag tells of his lying on his camp bed watching the photographs of his wife and children on the table before him, with tears in his eyes, and rhapsodizing about his wife's qualities of heart and intellect to the newspaper correspondent, until Freytag promised to dedicate his next book to her. "He gave me a look of assent and lay back satisfied." This in itself would rather pall on the German taste.

Worse still, Frederic used to write long letters home to his wife every day—often the work of striking the camp would be delayed until these epistles could be finished—and then the Crown Princess at Berlin would as regularly send the purport of these to her royal relatives in England and thence it would be telegraphed to France. Bismarck always believed, or professed to believe, that there was concerted treachery in this business. No one else is likely to credit this assumption. But at all events the fact is that this embarrassing diffusion of news was discovered and complained

of at the time, and charged against Frederic, and was the reason, as Bismarck bluntly declared during the discussion over the diary, why the Crown Prince was not trusted by his father or allowed to share state secrets.

As for the Empire itself, though the original idea of it was his, Frederic suffered the fate of many other inventors in having very little to do with it after it was put into working order. He presented a magnificently heroic figure on horseback in out-of-door spectacles, and his cultured tastes made the task of presiding over museums and learned societies congenial. But there his participation in public affairs ended.

The Empire he had dreamed of was of a wholly different sort from this prosaic, machine-like, departmental structure which Bismarck and Delbrück made. Frederic's vision had been of some splendid, picturesque, richly-decorated revival of the Holy Roman Empire. There are a number of delightful pages in Freytag's book giving the Crown Prince's romantic views on this point.[1] When the first Reichstag met in 1871, to acclaim the new Emperor in his own capital, Frederic introduced into the ceremony the ancient throne chair of the Saxon Emperors, which may now be seen in Henry's palace at Goslar, and which, having lain unknown for centuries in a Harz

[1] Freytag, pp. 115–130.

village, was discovered by being offered for sale by a peasant as old metal some seventy years ago.

Among practical Germans this attempt to link their new Empire with the discredited and disreputable old fabric, which had been too rotten for even the Hapsburgs to hold together, was extremely distasteful. Yet Frederic clung to this pseudo-mediævalism to the last. When he came to the throne as Kaiser his first proclamation spoke of "the re-established Empire." And those who were in Berlin at the time know how a whole day's delay was caused by the dissension over what title the new ruler should assume—the secret of which was that he desired to call himself Kaiser Friedrich IV, thus going back for imperial continuity to that Friedrich III who died while Martin Luther was a boy, and who is remembered only because he was the father of the great Max and was the original possessor of the Austrian under lip.

Freytag indeed says that to that first proclamation Frederic did affix a signature with an IV—the assumption being that Bismarck altered it.

The reader has been shown this less satisfying aspect of Frederic, as his associates saw him, because without understanding it the attitude of both his father and his son towards him would be flatly unintelligible. They did not believe that he would make a safe Emperor for Germany.

The old William all the same loved his son deeply, and manifested an almost extravagant delight at the creditable way in which he carried himself through the Bohemian and French campaigns. In the succeeding years of peace it is obvious enough that the venerable Kaiser grew despondent about his son's association with Radicals and their dreams—and it is equally clear that there were plenty of advisers at hand to confirm the old man in these gloomy doubts. Hence, though he cherished a sincere affection for "Unser Fritz" and his English wife, and would gladly have had them much about him, he could not help being of the party opposed to them—the party which lost no opportunity of exalting young William in his grandfather's eyes as the real hope of the Hohenzollerns. Thus there was a growing, though tacit, estrangement between the father and son.

When Frederic was stricken with disease, however, the kindly old father suffered keenly. There was great sweetness of nature in the tough martial frame of William I, and there is an abiding pathos in the picture we have of his last moments —the stout nonogenarian who fought death so valiantly even to his last breath that it seemed as if he could not die, rolling his white head on the pillow, and moaning piteously, "Poor Fritz! Poor Fritz!" with his rambling thoughts beyond the

snow-clad Alps, where his son was also in the destroyer's grasp.

As for young William, his estrangement from his father, if less noted, had been more complete. He belonged openly to another party, and moreover smarted under the reproach of being unfilial, which the friends of his parents, largely of the writing and printing class, publicly levelled at him.

Placed in this position, the shock of the news that his father had an incurable disease must have come upon him with peculiar force. We can only dimly imagine to ourselves the great struggles fought out in his breast between grief for the father, who had really been an ideal parent, loving, gentle, solicitous, and tenderly proud, and concern for the Empire, which might be doomed to have a wasting invalid at its head for years. On the one side was the repellent thought that this father's death would mean his own swift advancement, for the grandfather could clearly live but little longer. On the other side, if his father's life was prolonged, it meant the elevation to the throne of a sick man, whose fitness for the crown of this armed and beleaguered nation would at all times have been doubtful, and who, in his enfeebled state, at the mercy of the radical agitators and adventurers about him, might jeopardize the fortunes of Empire and dynasty alike.

Torn between these conflicting views, it is not

strange that William welcomed a middle course, suggested, I am authoritatively informed, by Frederic himself.

The Crown Prince returned to Berlin from Ems thoroughly frightened. He had no doubt whatever that he was suffering from cancer and expected to die within the year. Like all men of an expansive and impressionable temperament, he was subject to fits of profound melancholia—as Freytag puts it, "fond of indulging in gloomy thoughts and pessimistic humours;" so much so that he "sometimes cherished the idea of renouncing the throne, in case of its being vacant, and leaving the government to his son."[1] He had grown lethargic and dispirited through years of inaction and systematic exclusion from governmental labours and interests. He returned from Ems now, in this April of 1887, in a state of complete depression.

The evident affection and sympathy with which both his father and son received him, gave an added impulse to the despairing ideas which had conquered his mind since his sentence of death by cancer had been uttered.

In the course of a touching interview between the three Hohenzollerns, Frederic with tears in his eyes declared that he did not desire to reign, and that if by chance he survived his father he would

[1] Freytag, p. 78.

waive his rights of succession in favour of his elder son. This declaration was within a brief space of time repeated in the presence of Prince Bismarck, and was by him reduced to writing. The paper was deposited among the official private archives of the Crown at Berlin, and presumably is still in existence there.

CHAPTER V.

THROUGH THE SHADOWS TO THE THRONE.

THE fact that the Crown Prince Frederic, despondent and unnerved in the presence of a mortal disease, had voluntarily pledged himself to renounce his rights of succession, was naturally not published to the world. Although it is beyond doubt that such a pledge was given, nothing more definite than a roundabout hint has to this day been printed in Germany upon the subject. There are no means of ascertaining the exact number of personages in high position to whom this intelligence was imparted at the time. As has been said, the Emperor, the Chancellor, and the young heir were parties to Frederic's original action. Certain indications exist that for a time the secret was kept locked in the breasts of these four men. Then Frederic confessed to his wife what he had done.

The strangest feature of this whole curious business is that Frederic should ever have taken this gravely important step, not only without his wife's knowledge, but against all her interests. Her influence over him was of such commanding completeness, and his devotion to her so dominated his whole career and character, that the thing can only be explained by laying stress upon his admitted tendency to melancholia and assuming that his shaken nerves collapsed under the emotional strain of meeting his father and son with sympathetic tears in their eyes.

With the moment when the wife first learned of this abdication the active drama begins. She did not for an instant dream of suffering the arrangement to be carried out—at least until every conceivable form of resistance had been exhausted. We can fancy this proud, energetic princess casting about anxiously here, there, everywhere, for means with which to fight the grimly-powerful combination against her husband's future and her own, and can well believe that in the darkest hour of the struggle which ensued this true daughter of the Fighting Guelphs never lost heart.

For friends it was hopeless to look anywhere in Germany. She had lived in Berlin and Potsdam for nearly thirty years, devoting her large talents and wide sympathies to the encouragement of literature, science, and the arts, to the inculcation

of softening and merciful thoughts embodied in new hospitals, asylums, and charitable institutions, and the formation of orders of nurses; most earnestly of all, to the task of lifting the women of Germany up in the domestic and social scale, and making of them something higher than mere mothers of families and household drudges. Nobody thanked her for her pains, least of all the women she had striven to befriend. Her undoubted want of tact and reserve in commenting upon the foibles of her adopted countrymen kept her an alien in the German mind, in spite of everything she did to foster a kindlier attitude. The feelings of the country at large were passively hostile to her. The influential classes hated her vehemently.

That she should link together in her mind this widespread and assiduously-cultivated enmity to her, and this new and alarming conspiracy to keep her husband from the throne, was most natural. She leaped to the conclusion that it was all a plot, planned by her ancient and implacable foe, Bismarck. That her own son was in it made the thing more acutely painful, but only increased her determination to fight.

Instinctively she turned to her English home for help. Although nearly two centuries have passed since George I entered upon his English inheritance, and more than half a century has gone by since the last signs of British dominion

were removed from Hanover, the dynastic family politics of Windsor and Balmoral remain almost exclusively German. In all the confused and embittered squabbles which have kept the royal and princely houses of Germany by the ears since the close of the Napoleonic wars, the interference of the British Guelph has been steadily pitted against the influence of the Prussian Hohenzollern. Hardly one of the changes which, taken altogether, have whittled the reigning families of Germany from thirty down to a shadowy score since 1820, has been made without the active meddling of English royalty on one side or the other—most generally on the losing side. Hence, while it was natural that the Crown Princess should remember in her time of sore trial that she was also Princess Royal in England, it was equally to be expected that Germany should prepare itself to resent this fresh case of British intermeddling.

The scheme of battle which the Crown Princess, in counsel with her insular relatives, decided upon was at once ingenious and bold. It could not, unfortunately, be gainsaid that her husband, Frederic, had formally pledged himself to relinquish the crown *if* he proved to be afflicted with a mortal disease. Very well; the war must be waged upon that "if."

A good many momentous letters had crossed the North Sea, heavily sealed and borne by trusted

messengers, before the system of defence was disclosed by the first overt movement. On the 20th of May, 1887, Dr. Morell Mackenzie, the best known of London specialists in throat diseases, arrived in Berlin, and was immediately introduced to a conference of German physicians, heretofore in charge of the case, as a colleague who was to take henceforth the leading part. They told him that to the best of their belief they had to deal with a cancer, but were awaiting his diagnosis. On the following day, and a fortnight later, he performed operations upon the illustrious patient's throat to serve as the basis for a microscopical examination. With his forceps he drew out bits of flesh, which were sent to Prof. Virchow for scientific scrutiny. Upon examining these Prof. Virchow reported he discovered nothing to "excite the suspicion of wider and graver disease," [1] thus giving the most powerful support imaginable to Dr. Mackenzie's diagnosis of "a benign growth."

The German physicians allege that Dr. Mackenzie drew out pieces of the comparatively healthful right vocal cord. The London specialist denies this. Nothing could be further from the purpose of this work than to take sides upon any phase of the unhappy and undignified controversy which ensued. It is enough here to note the charge, as indicating the view which Prof. Gerhardt

[1] Mackenzie's "Frederic the Noble," p. 34.

and his German colleagues took from the first of Mackenzie's mission in Berlin.

This double declaration against the theory of cancer having been obtained, the next step was to secure the removal of Frederic. The celebration of the Queen's jubilee afforded a most valuable occasion. He came to England on June 14th—and he never again stepped foot in Berlin until he returned as Kaiser the following year. Nearly three months were spent at Norwood, and in Scotland and the Isle of Wight. A brief stop in the Austrian Tyrol followed, and then the Crown Prince settled in his winter home at San Remo. On the day of his arrival there Mackenzie was telegraphed for, as very dangerous symptoms had presented themselves. He reached San Remo on November 5, 1887, and discovered so grave a situation that Prince William was immediately summoned from Berlin.

That the young Prince had been placed in a most trying position by the quarrel which now raged about his father's sick-room, need not be pointed out. The physicians who stood highest in Berlin, and who were backed by the liking and confidence of William's friends, were deeply indignant at having been superseded by two Englishmen like Mackenzie and Hovell. This national prejudice became easily confounded with partisan antagonisms. The Germans are not

celebrated for calm, or for skill in conducting controversies with delicacy, and in this instance the worst side of everybody concerned was exhibited.

One recalls now with astonishment the boundless rancour and recklessness of accusation which characterized that bitter wrangle. Many good people of one party seriously believed that the German physicians wanted to gain access to Frederic in order to kill him. On the other hand, a great number insisted that Mackenzie was deceiving the public, and had subjected Frederic to the most terrible maimings and tortures in order to conceal from Germany the fact of the cancer. The basest motives were ascribed by either side to the other. The Court circle asked what they were doing, then, to the Crown Prince that they hid him away in Italy; the answering insinuation was that very good reasons existed for not allowing him to fall into the hands of the Berlin doctors, who were so openly devoted to his heir.

In a state of public mind where hints of assassination grow familiar to the ear, the mere charge of a lack of filial affection sounds very tame indeed.

That William deserved during this painful period the reproaches heaped upon him by the whole English-speaking world is by no means clear. Such fault as may be with fairness

imputed to him, seems to have grown quite naturally out of the circumstances. He was on the side of the German physicians as against Mackenzie; but after all that has happened that can scarcely be regarded as a crime. He could not but range himself with those who resented the tone Dr. Mackenzie and his friends assumed toward what they called "the Court circles of Berlin."

When he reached San Remo in November, it was to note the death mark clearly stamped on his father's face; yet he heard the English *entourage* still talking about the possibility of the disease not being cancer. The German doctors had grievous stories to tell him about how they had been crowded out and put under the heel of the foreigner. Whether he would or not, he was made a party to the whole wretched wrangle which henceforth vexed the atmosphere of the Villa Zirio.

The outside world was subjecting this villa and its inhabitants to the most tirelessly inquisitive scrutiny. Newspaper correspondents engirdled San Remo with a cordon of espionage, through which filtered the gossip of servants and the stray babbling of tradespeople. Dr. Mackenzie—now become Sir Morell—confided his views of the case to journalists who desired them. The German physicians furtively promulgated stories of quite

a different hue, through the medium of the German press. Thus it came about that, while Germany as a whole disliked deeply the manner in which Frederic's case was managed, the English-speaking peoples espoused the opposite view and condemned as cruel and unnatural the position occupied by the Germans, with young William at their head.

As the winter of 1887–8 went forward, it became apparent that the Kaiser's prolonged life had run its span. The question which would die first, old William or middle-aged Frederic, hung in a fluttering balance. Germany watched the uncertain development of this dual tragedy with bated breath, and all Christendom bent its attention upon Germany and her two dying Hohenzollerns.

March came, with its black skies and drifting snow wreaths and bitter winds blown a thousand miles across the Sclavonic sand plains, and laid the aged Kaiser upon his deathbed. Prince William, having alternated through the winter between Berlin and San Remo, was at the last in attendance upon his grandfather. The dying old man spoke to him as if he were the immediate heir. Upon him all the injunctions of state and family policy which the departing monarch wished to utter were directly laid. The story of those conferences will doubtless never be revealed in its

entirety. But it is known that, if any notion had up to that time existed of keeping Frederic from the throne, it was now abandoned. William was counselled to loving patience and submission during the little reign which his father at best could have. Bismarck was pledged to remain in office upon any and all terms short of peremptory dismissal through this same brief period.

It was to William, too, that that last exhortation to be "considerate" with Russia was muttered by the dying man — that strange domestic legacy of the Hohenzollerns which hints at the murder of Charles XII, recalls the partition of Poland, the despair of Jena, and the triumph of Waterloo, and has yet in store we know not what still stranger things.

William I died on March 9, 1888. On the morning of the following day Frederic and his wife and daughters left San Remo in a special train and arrived at Berlin on the night of the 11th, having made the swiftest long journey known in the records of continental railways. The new Kaiser's proclamation—"To my People" —bears the date of March 12th, but it was really not issued until the next day.

During that period of delay, the Schloss at Charlottenburg, which had been hastily fitted up for the reception of the invalid, was the scene of protracted conferences between Frederic, his son

William, and Bismarck. Hints are not lacking that these interviews had their stormy and unpleasant side, for Frederic had up to this time fairly maintained his general health, and could to a limited extent make use of his voice. But all that is visible to us of this is the fact that some sort of understanding was arrived at, by which Bismarck could remain in office and accept responsibility for the acts of the reign.

The story of those melancholy ninety-nine days need not detain us long. Young William himself, though standing now in the strong light of public scrutiny, on the steps of the throne, remained silent, and for the most part motionless. The world gossiped busily about his heartless conduct toward his mother, his callous behaviour in the presence of his father's terrible affliction, his sympathy with those who most fiercely abused the good Sir Morell Mackenzie. As there had been tales of his unfilial actions at San Remo, so now there were stories of his shameless haste to snatch the reins of power from his father's hands. So late as August, 1889, an anonymous writer alleged in *The New Review* that "the watchers by the sick bed in Charlottenburg were always in dread when 'Willie' visited his father lest he might brusquely demand the establishment of a Regency."

Next to no proof of these assertions can be

discovered in Berlin. If there was talk of a Regency—as well there might be among those who knew of the existence of Frederic's offer to abdicate—it did not in any way come before the public. I know of no one qualified to speak who says that it ever came before even Frederic.

That a feeling of bitterness existed between William and his parents is not to be denied. All the events of the past year had contributed to intensify this feeling and to put them wider and wider apart. Even if the young man had been able to divest himself of the last emotion of self-sensitiveness, there would still have remained the dislike for the whole England-Mackenzie-San Remo episode which rankled in every conservative German mind. But neither the blood nor the training of princes helps them to put thoughts of self aside—and in William's case a long chain of circumstances bound him to a position which, though we may find it extremely unpleasant to the eye, seemed to him a simple matter of duty and of justice to himself and to Prussia.

The world gladly preserves and cherishes an idealized picture of the knightly Kaiser Frederic, facing certain death with intrepid calm, and labouring devotedly to turn what fleeting days might be left him to the advantage of liberalism in Germany. It is a beautiful and elevating picture, and we are all of us the richer for its possession.

But, in truth, Frederic practically accomplished but one reform during his reign, and that came in the very last week of his life and was bought at a heavy price. To the end he gave a surprisingly regular attention to the tasks of a ruler. Both at Charlottenburg and, later, at Potsdam, he forced himself, dying though he was, to daily devote two hours or more to audiences with ministers and officials, and an even greater space of time in his library to signing State papers and writing up his diary. But this labour was almost wholly upon routine matters.

Two incidents of the brief reign are remembered—the frustrated attempt to marry one of the Prussian Princesses to a Battenberg and the successful expulsion of Puttkamer from the Prussian Ministry of the Interior.

The Battenberg episode attracted much the greater share of public attention at the time, not only from the element of romance inherent in the subject, but because it seemed to be an obvious continuation of the Anglo-German feud which had been flashing its lightnings about Frederic's devoted head for a twelvemonth. Of the four Battenberg Princes—cousins of the Grand Duke of Hesse by a morganatic marriage, and hence, according to Prussian notions, not "born" at all—one had married a daughter, another a granddaughter of the Queen of England. This seemed

to the German aristocracy a most remarkable thing, and excited a good deal of class feeling, but was not important so long as these upstart *protégés* of English eccentricity kept out of reach of German snubs.

A third Battenberg, Alexander, had made for himself a considerable name as Prince of Bulgaria: in fact, had done so well that the Germans felt like liking him in spite of his brothers. The way in which he had completely thrashed the Servians, moreover, reflected credit upon the training he had had in the German Army. In his sensational quarrel with the Czar, too, German opinion leaned to his side, and altogether there was a kindly feeling toward him. Perhaps if there had been no antecedent quarrel about English interference, even his matrimonial adoption into the Hohenzollern family might have been tolerated with good grace.

As it was, the announcement at the end of March that he was to be betrothed to the Princess Victoria, the second daughter of Frederic, provoked on the instant a furious uproar. The Junker class all over Germany protested indignantly. The "reptile" press promptly raised the cry that this was more of the alien work of the English Empress, who had been prompted by her English mother to put this fresh affront upon all true Germans. Prince Bismarck himself hastened

to Berlin and sternly insisted upon the abandonment of the obnoxious idea. There was a fierce struggle before a result was reached, with hot feminine words and tears of rage on one side, with square-jawed, gruff-voiced obstinacy and much plain talk on the other. At last Bismarck overbore opposition and had his way. Prince William manifested almost effusive gratitude to the Chancellor for having dispelled this nightmare of a Battenberg brother-in-law.

The solicitude about this project seems to have been largely maternal. Sir Morell Mackenzie says of the popular excitement over the subject: "I cannot say that it produced much effect on the Emperor." As for the Princess Victoria, she has now for some time been the wife of Prince Adolph of Schaumburg-Lippe.

Although it did not attract a tithe of the attention given the Battenberg marriage sensation, the dismissal of Puttkamer was really an important act, the effects of which were lasting in Germany. This official had been Minister of the Interior since 1881—a thoroughgoing Bismarckian administrator, whose use of the great machinery of his office to coerce voters, intimidate opposition, and generally grease the wheels of despotic government, had become the terror and despair of Prussian Liberalism. To have thrown him out of office it was worth while to reign only ninety-nine days.

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Ostensibly his retirement was a condition imposed by Frederic before he would sign the Reichstag's bill lengthening the Parliamentary term to five years. The Radicals had hoped he would veto it, and the overthrow of Puttkamer was offered as a solace to these wounded hopes. But in reality Puttkamer had been doomed from the outset of the new reign. He was conspicuous among those who spoke with contempt of Frederic, and in his ministerial announcement of the old Kaiser's death to the public, insolently neglected to say a word about his successor. Questioned about this later, he had the impertinence to say that he could not find out what title the new Kaiser would choose to assume.

Puttkamer's resignation was gazetted on June 11th, and that very evening Prince Bismarck gave a great dinner, at which the fallen Minister was the guest of honour. In one sense the insult was wasted, for out at Potsdam the invalid at whom it was levelled could no longer eat, and was obviously close to death. Indirectly, however, the affront made a mark upon the world's memory. We shall hear of Puttkamer again.

On the 1st day of June Frederic had been conveyed by boat to Potsdam, where he wished to spend his remaining weeks in the most familiar of his former homes, the New Palace, the name of which he changed to Friedrichskron. He was

already a dying man. Two clever observers, who were on the little pier at Gleinicke, described to me the appearance of the Emperor when he was carried up out of the cabin to land. Said one: "He was crouched down, wretched, scared, and pallid, like a man going to execution." The other added: "Say rather like an enfeebled maniac in charge of his keepers."

Yet, broken and crushed as he was, he was Kaiser to the last. The announcement of Puttkamer's downfall came on June 11th. Frederic died on June 15th.

It was in the late forenoon of that rainy, gray summer day that the black and white royal standard above the palace fell—signifying that the eighth King of Prussia was no more. A moment later orderlies were running hither and thither outside; the troops within the palace park hastily threw themselves into line, and detachments were at once marched to each of the gates to draw a cordon between Friedrichskron and all the world besides.

In an inner room in the great palace the elder son of the dead Kaiser, all at once become William II, German Emperor, King in Prussia, eighteen times a Duke, twice a Grand Duke, ten times a Count, fifteen times a Seigneur, and three times a Margrave—this young man, with fifty-four titles

thus suddenly plumped down upon him,[1] seated himself to write proclamations to his Army and his Navy.

[1] With the possible exception of the Emperor of Austria, William is the most betitled man in Europe. Beside being German Emperor and King of Prussia, he is Margrave of Brandenburg, and the two Lausitzes; Grand Duke of Lower Rhineland and Posen; Duke of Silesia, Glatz, Saxony, Westphalia, Engern, Pomerania, Luneburg, Holstein-Schleswig, Magdeburg, Bremen, Geldern, Cleve, Juliers and Berg, Crossen, Lauenburg, Mecklenburg, of the Wends and of the Cassubes; Landgrave of Hesse and Thuringia; Prince of Orange; Count-Prince of Henneburg; Count of the Mark, of Ravensberg, of Hohenstein, of Lingen and Tecklenburg, of Mansfeld, Sigmaringen, Veringen, and of Hohenzollern; Burgrave of Nuremberg; Seigneur of Frankfurt, Rügen, East Friesland, Paderborn, Pyrmont, Halberstadt, Münster, Minden, Osnabruck, Hildesheim, Verden, Kammin, Fulda, Nassau and Moers.

CHAPTER VI.

UNDER THE SWAY OF THE BISMARCKS.

DURING the three days between the death and burial of Frederic the world saw and heard nothing of his successor save these two proclamations to the Army and Navy. This in itself was sufficiently strange. It was like a slap in the face of nineteenth-century civilization that this young man, upon whom the vast task of ruling an empire rich in historical memories of peaceful progress had devolved, should take such a barbaric view of his position. In this country which gave birth to the art of printing, this Germany wherein Dürer and Cranach worked and Luther changed the moral history of mankind and Lessing cleared the way for that noble band of poets of whom Goethe stands first and Wagner is not last, it seemed nothing less than monstrous that a youth called to be Emperor should see only columns of troops and iron-clads.

The purport of these proclamations, shot forth from the printing press while the news of Frederic's death was still in the air, fitted well the precipitancy of their appearance. William delivered a long eulogy upon his grandfather, made only a passing allusion to his father, recited the warlike achievements and character of his remoter ancestors, and closed by saying: "Thus we belong to each other, I and the army; thus we were born for one another; and firmly and inseparably will we hold together, whether it is God's will to give us peace or storm."

Exultant militarism rang out from every line of these utterances. The world listened to this young man boasting about being a war lord, with feelings nicely graded upon a scale of distances. Those near by put hands on sword hilts; those further away laughed contemptuously; but all alike, far and near, felt that an evil day for Germany had dawned.

The funeral of old William at Berlin in March had been a spectacle memorable in the history of mankind—the climacteric demonstration of the pomp and circumstance of European monarchical systems. A simple military funeral, a trifle more ornate than that of a General of division, was given to his successor. The day, June 18th, was the anniversary of Waterloo.

It may have been due to thoughts upon what

this day meant in Prussian history: more probably it reflected the chastened and softening influences of these three days' meditation in the palace of death; from whatever cause, William's address to the Prussian people, issued on the 18th, was a much more satisfactory performance. The tone of the drill sergeant was entirely lacking, and the words about his father, the departed Frederic, were full of filial sweetness. The closing paragraph fairly mirrors the whole proclamation:

"I have vowed to God that, after the example of my fathers, I will be a just and clement Prince to my people, that I will foster piety and the fear of God, and that I will protect the peace, promote the welfare of the country, be a helper of the poor and distressed, and a true guardian of the right."

Pondering upon the marked difference between this address and the excited and vain-glorious harangue to the fighting men of Germany which heralded William's accession, it occurred to me to inquire whether or not Dr. Hinzpeter had in the interim made his appearance at Potsdam. No one could remember, but the point may be worth the attention of the future historian.

Studying all that has since happened in the variant lights of these proclamations of June 15th and June 18th, one sees a constant struggle between two Williams—between the gentle, dreamy-eyed, soft-faced boy of Cassel, and the vain, arrogant

youth who learned to clank a sword at his heels and twist a baby moustache in Bonn. Such conflicts and clashings between two hostile inner selves have a part in the personal history of each of us. Only we are not out under the searching glare of illumination which beats upon a prince, and the records and results of these internal warrings are of interest to ourselves alone.

William, moreover, has one of those nervous, delicately-poised, highly-sensitized temperaments which responds readily and without reserve to the emotion of the moment. Increasing years seem to be strengthening his judgment, but they do not advance him out of the impressionable age. In the romantic idealism and mysticism of his mind, and in the histrionic bent of his impulses, he is a true son of his father, a genuine heir of the strange fantastic Ascanien strain, which meant greatness in Catharine II, madness in her son Paul, and whimsical staginess in his grand-daughter Augusta.

Like his father, too, his nature is peculiarly susceptible to the domination of a stronger and more deeply rooted personality. The wide difference between them arises from this very similitude. Frederic spent all his adult life under the influence of the broad-minded, cultured, and high-thinking English Princess, his wife. William, during these years now under notice, was in the grip of the Bismarcks.

The ascendency of this family, which attained its zenith in these first months of the young Kaiser's reign, is a unique thing in the history of Prussia. The Hohenzollerns have been hereditarily a stiff-backed race, much addicted to personal government, and not at all given to leaning on other people. From 1660 to 1860 you will search their records in vain for the name of a minister who was allowed to usurp functions not strictly his own. The first Frederic William was a good deal pulled about and managed by inferiors, it is true, but they did it only by making themselves seem more his inferiors than any others about him. No Wolsey or Richelieu or Metternich could thrive in the keen air of the Mark of Brandenburg, under the old kingly traditions of Prussia.

Bismarck rose upon the ruins of those traditions. In 1862 the Prussian Diet and Prussian society generally were in open revolt against the new king, William I. Constitutionalism and the spread of modern ideas had made the old absolutist system of the Hohenzollerns impossible; budgets were thrown out, constituencies were abetted in their mutiny by the nobles, and the newspaper press was fiercely hostile. The King, a frank, kindly, slow-minded old soldier, did not know what to do. The thought of surrendering his historic prerogatives under pressure, and the

resource of sweeping Berlin's streets with grape-shot, were equally hateful to him. In his perplexity he summoned his Ambassador at Paris to Berlin, and begged him to undertake the defence of the monarchy against its enemies. He made this statesman, Otto von Bismarck, Minister of the King's House and of Foreign Affairs, and avowedly a Premier who had undertaken to rule Prussia without a Parliament.

It was the old story of the Saxons, being invited to defend the British homestead, and remaining to enjoy it themselves.

The lapse of a quarter of a century found this King magnified into an Emperor, enjoying the peaceful semblance of a reign over 48,000,000 of people, where before he had stormily failed to govern much less than half that number. He had grown into the foremost place among European sovereigns so easily and without friction, and was withal so honest and amiable an old gentleman, that it did not disturb him to note how much greater a man than himself his Minister had come to be.

The relations between William I and Bismarck were always frank, loyal, and extremely simple. They were fond of each other, mutually grateful for what each had helped the other to do and to be. It illumines one of the finest traits in the great Chancellor's character to realize that, during the last eighteen years of the old Kaiser's life,

Bismarck would never go to the opera or theatre for fear the popular reception given to him might wound the royal sensitiveness of his master.

Bismarck, having all power in his own hands, became possessed of that most human of passions, the desire to found a dynasty, and hand this authority down to his posterity. There was a certain amount of promising material in his older son Herbert—a robust, rough-natured, fairly-acute, and altogether industrious man—ten years older than the Prince William, now become Kaiser. The strength of Prince Bismarck's hold upon the old William was only matched by the supremacy he had thus far managed to exert over the imperial grandson. He dreamed a vision of having Herbert as omnipotent in the Germany of the twentieth century as he had been in the last half of the nineteenth.

The story of his terrible disillusion belongs to a later stage. At the time with which we are dealing, and indeed for nearly a year after William's accession in June of 1888, the ascendency of the Bismarcks was complete. Men with fewer infirmities of temper and feminine capacities for personal grudges and jealousies might possibly have maintained that ascendency, or the semblance of it, for years. But a long lease of absolute power had developed the petty sides of their characters. During the brief reign of Frederic

they had had to suffer certain slights and rebuffs at the hands of his Liberal friends who were temporarily brought to the front. To their swollen *amour propre* nothing else seemed so important now as to avenge these indignities. The new Kaiser they thought of as wholly their man, and they proceeded to use him as a rod for the backs of their enemies.

It remains a surprising thing that they were allowed to go so far in this evil direction before William revolted and called a halt. For what they did before a stop was put to their career it is impossible not to blame him as well as them. In truth, he began by being so wholly under their influence that even his own individual acts were coloured by their prejudices and hates.

If he had been momentarily softened by the pathetic conditions surrounding his father's funeral, his heart steeled itself again soon enough under the sway of the Bismarcks. He entered with gratuitous zest upon a course of demonstrative disrespect to his father's memory.

Frederic had been born in the spacious, rambling New Palace at Potsdam, and in adult life had made it his principal home. Here all his children save William were born, and here William himself spent his boyhood, as Mr. Bigelow has so pleasantly told us,[1] playing with his brother Henry

[1] *New Review*, August, 1889.

in their attic nursery, or cruising in their little toy frigate on the neighbouring lakes. Here Frederic at the end came home to die, and in the last fortnight of his life formally decreed that the name of the New Palace should henceforth be Friedrichskron—or Frederic's Crown.

All who have seen the splendid edifice, embowered in the ancient royal forest parks, will recognize the poetic and historic fitness of the name. From its centre rises a dome, surmounted by three female figures supporting an enormous kingly crown. There was a time when Europe talked as much about this emblematic dome as we did a year or so ago about the Eiffel Tower, though for widely different reasons. It was not remarkable from any scientific point of view, but it embodied in visible bronze a colossal insult levelled by Frederic the Great at the three most powerful women in the world. When that tireless creature emerged from the Seven Years' War, he began busying himself by the construction of this palace. Everybody had supposed him to be ruined financially, but he had his father's secret hoards almost intact, and during the six years 1763–9, drew from them over £2,000,000 to complete this structure. With characteristic insolence he reared upon the dome, in the act of upholding his crown, three naked figures having the faces of Catherine of Russia, Maria Theresa of Austria,

and Mme. Pompadour of France, each with her back turned toward her respective country. The irony was coarse, but perhaps it may be forgiven to a man who had so notably come through the prolonged life-and-death struggle forced upon him by these women.

At all events, it was an intelligent and proper thing to give the palace the name of Friedrichskron, and one would think that, even if the change had been less fitting than it was, the wish of the dying man about the house of his birth could not but command respect.

One of William's first acts was to order the discontinuance of the new name, and in his proclamation he ostentatiously reverted to the former usage of "New Palace."

To glance ahead for a moment, there came in September an even more painful illustration of the unfilial attitude to which William had hardened himself. The *Deutsche Rundschau* created a sudden sensation by printing the diary of Frederic, from July 11, 1870, to March 12th of the following year, covering the entire French campaign and all the negotiations leading up to the formation of the German Empire. Quotations have already been made in these pages showing that this diary demonstrated authoritatively the fallacy of Bismarck's claim to be the originator of the Empire. Frederic and the others had had, in fact, to drag

him into a reluctant acceptance of the imperial idea. The shock of now all at once learning this was felt all over Germany. Every mind comprehended that the blow had been aimed straight at the Chancellor's head. Nobody seemed to see, least of all Bismarck, that the diary really gave the Chancellor a higher title than that of inventor of the Empire, and revealed him as a wise, far-seeing statesman, who would not submit to the fascination of the imperial scheme until he made sure that its realization would be of genuine benefit to all Germany. So far, indeed, was he from recognizing this that he allowed the publication to rob him of all control over his temper.

The edition of the *Rundschau* was at once confiscated, and on September 23rd Bismarck sent a "report" to the Emperor upon the diary. He set up the pretence of doubting its genuineness as a cloak for saying the most brutal things about its dead author. The charge was openly made that Frederic could not be trusted with any State secrets owing to the fear of "indiscreet revelations to the English Court," and therefore "stood without the sphere of all business negotiations." Further, he asserted that the portions of the diary expressing willingness to force the Southern States into the Empire must be forgeries, because "such ideas are equally contemptible from the

standpoint of honourable feeling and that of policy." In conclusion he pointed out that, even if the diary were genuine, Frederic in giving it for publication would be a traitor under Article XCII of the Penal Code.

Of the genuineness of the diary there was, of course, no question whatever in anybody's mind, least of all in Bismarck's or William's. Yet the young Kaiser permitted this gross attack by the Chancellor upon his father's honour and patriotism to be officially published, and gave his consent to a prosecution of those responsible for the appearance of the diary in the *Rundschau*.

The story of the prosecution is a familiar one. Dr. Geffcken was found to be the friend to whom Frederic had entrusted this portion of his diary, and he was arrested and thrown into prison, to be brought before the imperial tribunal at Leipsic. The ingrate Friedberg put his talents at the disposal of the Bismarcks to draw up the case against him. The houses of Geffcken and Baron von Roggenbach were ransacked, and a correspondence covering many years was seized and searched by Bismarck's emissaries. These letters were said to contain many compromising references to the Crown Princess, Princess Alice, Sir Robert Morier, and others whom Bismarck alleged to be in a conspiracy against him. This charge of being desirous of the Chancellor's downfall grew

indeed to be the principal item in the attack upon Geffcken.

The indictment for high treason was at last, on January 2, 1889, brought before the Judges of the Supreme Court of Judicature at Leipsic, and they threw it out with ignominious swiftness. Geffcken himself, badly broken in health and mind, was released on the 4th. This was Bismarck's first public mishap under the new reign, and it attracted much surprised attention at the time, as showing both the Chancellor's lack of intelligent self-restraint in getting into a fury over a revelation which really redounded to his credit, and his ignorance of German law. The opening month of the year 1889, in which this happened, was invested with importance in another way, as we shall see in due course.

But for the time, returning now to the middle of 1888, William seemed to delight in exhibiting himself to the public eye as the man of the Bismarcks. One of his earliest acts was to make a special journey to Friedrichsruh to visit the Chancellor, and the most popular photograph of the year was that representing him standing on the lawn in front of this château, in company with Bismarck and the famous "Reichshund." In Berlin, too, people noted his custom of paying early morning calls at the house of Herbert Bismarck, and wondered how long this enthusiastic self-abasement would last.

While it did last, this influence of the Bismarcks was so powerful and all-pervasive that it is very difficult to follow the thread of the young Kaiser's own personality through the busy period of his first half-year's reign. One continually confronts this embarrassment of inability to separate what he himself wanted to do from what was suggested by these powers behind the throne. We know now that the Kaiser possesses a strongly-marked individuality and an unusually active and fertile mind. Doubtless these asserted themselves a great deal at even this early stage, but there is little or nothing to guide us in distinguishing their effects.

The truth seems to be that at this time, in these opening months of his reign, William's inclinations ran so wholly in Bismarckian channels that even what he himself initiated was in practice a part of the Bismarcks' work.

This is especially true of the young Kaiser's first important step in the field of international politics. He had been on the throne for less than four weeks when he started off to pay a State visit to the Czar of Russia. He had not been invited, and it was apparent enough in Russian Court circles that his hasty and impulsive descent upon their summer leisure was as unwelcome as it was surprising. He himself appears to have been swayed both by memories of his grandfather's

injunction to friendliness toward Russia, and by Bismarck's desire to make a demonstration of unfriendliness to England.

This note of anti-English prejudice is dominant throughout all that immediately followed. During Frederic's brief tenure of power, in April of 1888, Queen Victoria had made a journey to Berlin, and had spent several days in the company of her dying son-in-law and afflicted daughter at the palace of Charlottenburg. Her coming was not at all grateful to the Junker class, and it was rendered highly unpopular among Berliners generally by a curiously tactless performance on the part of the Empress Frederic. To properly receive her royal mother it was necessary to refurnish and decorate a suite of rooms in the Charlottenburg Schloss, and orders were sent to London for all this new furniture, and for English workmen to make the needed alterations. As may be imagined, this slight upon the tradesmen and artizans of Berlin was deeply resented, and there was considerable ground for nervousness lest the Queen should have some manifestation of this dislike thrust upon her notice during her stay. Fortunately, this did not happen, but Prince William behaved so coldly toward his grandmother that her Majesty could have had no doubt as to the attitude of his friends.

Later on, after Frederic's death, came confused

stories about the arbitrary and unjust way in which his widow had been treated, both personally and as regarded her property rights. These matters are all settled now, and were the subject of great exaggeration even then, but they created so much bad blood at the time that the Prince of Wales in the following autumn left Vienna upon a hastily improvised and wholly fictitious hunting tour, rather than remain and meet his nephew, Kaiser William, who was coming that way.

Nothing very notable occurred during the July journeys to Russia, Sweden, and Denmark, and the autumnal trip to Austria and Italy presented no incidents of importance save this sudden flight of the indignant Prince of Wales, and a distinctly unpleasant bungling of the visit to the Pope. This latter episode has become famous in the annals of Prussian brusqueness and incivility. The young Kaiser in his white cuirassier uniform and eagle-capped helmet bluntly told the venerable Pontiff that his dreams of regaining temporal power were all childish nonsense, and the still ruder Herbert Bismarck broke up the interview by forcing his way into the Pope's private apartments, dragging amiable young Prince Henry with him as a pretext for his boisterous insolence. This was thought to be a smart trick at the time, and Herbert and the German Ambassador openly chuckled over it.

William himself is said to have remarked to King Humbert after his return from the call upon Leo XIII: "I have destroyed his illusions." At least the Holy Father no longer indulged illusions as to what the German Emperor was like—but in his mild, tranquil manner confided to certain members of his intimate household the pious fear that William was a conceited and headstrong young man, whose reign would end in disaster.

These journeys did little more than confirm the world in sharing the Pope's unfavourable opinion of William. Both by his ostentatious visit to Russia before even his two allies of the triple compact had been greeted, and by his marked avoidance of England while visiting all the other maritime nations of the north, he was credited with desiring to offend the country of his mother's birth. That country returned his dislike with interest.

Finally, on the 1st day of January, 1889, he put the capstone upon this evil and unfilial reputation which he had been for a year building up in the minds of English-speaking people. Badly as the outside world thought of him by this time, it learned now with amazement that he had selected for special New Year's honours the ex-Minister Puttkamer. The one important act of Frederic's reign had been the dismissal of this man, to whom

William now, with marks of peculiar distinction, gave the order of the Black Eagle.

A groan of despairing disgust rose from every part of the globe where people were watching German affairs. How could any good thing whatsoever be expected from such a son?

CHAPTER VII.

THE BEGINNINGS OF A BENEFICENT CHANGE.

THE opening month of 1889 was a momentous period in the history of the young Emperor. The decoration of Puttkamer, who stood in all eyes as a type of the late Kaiser's bitterest and most malignant foes, put the finishing touch to the demonstrative unfilial stage of William's career. Men had been brought by this deed to think as badly of him as they could—when lo! the whole situation suddenly changed. This crowning act of affront to his father's memory was also the last. From that very month it is a new William who presents himself for consideration.

It is not possible to put the finger upon any one special cause for the change in the Kaiser's views and feelings which from this time began to manifest itself. There were in truth many reasons

working together to effect this alteration, at once so subtle and so swift.

In its essence the abrupt new departure was due to the awakened consciousness in William's mind that the Bismarcks had been making a fool of him. Royalty can bear any calamity better than this. The saying ascribed to Louis XVIII, "For the love of God, do not render me ridiculous!" puts into words the thought that has lain closest to every monarch's heart since kings have had a being. And it was in William's nature to regard himself and his position with exceptional seriousness.

It would be extremely interesting to follow the mental processes by which William all at once reached this realizing sense of his position, and saw how poor and contemptible a figure he had been made to cut in the eyes of the civilized world. As it is, we can only glance briefly at the more obvious of the causes which led to this welcome awakening.

First of all, the High Court of Leipsic, on January 4th, threw out the indictment which Bismarck had been so savagely pressing against Dr. Geffcken, for the treasonable publication of a part of the Emperor Frederic's diary. The official ransacking of all his correspondence, and that of his most intimate associates, had revealed nothing save additional proof that the late Princess Alice

of Hesse, Sir Robert Morier, and Dr. Geffcken were close friends of Frederic and his wife—which, of course, everybody knew before, but which the Bismarckian journals had paraded afresh as a reason for new insults to the dead Kaiser's memory and to the widowed Empress Frederic. The prompt adverse decision of the court dealt a sharp blow to this scandalous abuse of power.

In addition, the Bismarcks were meanwhile conducting a fierce public campaign against Sir Robert Morier, the British Ambassador at St. Petersburg—or rather, through him, against the honour of the late Emperor. Their accusation, based upon some alleged verbal statement of Marshal Bazaine, made at a time when he was most hopelessly discredited and new in exile, was that Frederic had systematically revealed the secrets of the German Army plans to Morier, who had sent them to England to be wired across to France. When Sir Robert Morier produced Bazaine's written denial of the alleged utterances and sent it to Herbert Bismarck, with a polite request for a withdrawal of the odious charge, he received a letter of refusal, couched in grossly insulting terms. This controversy, culminating about the time of the collapse of the Geffcken prosecution, no doubt contributed much to the opening of William's eyes.

There were not wanting at Berlin clever people ready to take advantage of these foolish excesses of the arrogant and over-confident Bismarcks. Their arbitrary and despotic courses had offended many besides those who would naturally be opposed to them politically, and there now sprang up, as out of the earth, a singular combination of the most diverse political elements, united only in their hatred for the Bismarcks. In this incongruous alliance Radicals and Jew-baiters joined hands, and ultra-Conservatives stood side by side with the Empress Frederic's Liberal faction. The headquarters of this odd combination were at the residence of Alfred Count von Waldersee.

This powerful personage, who for years, as Quartermaster-General, was in training as Moltke's visible heir, and was until recently at the head of the greatest fighting machine the human race ever saw, is still but little known to the general public. This is because press popularity and interesting personal qualities and connections have nothing whatever to do with a man's promotion in the German Army. Heroic actions on the field advance him no more than does the advertising faculty in times of peace. He rises to each place because he is judged to be fittest for that particular post, and this judgment sternly sets aside all considerations not immediately concerned with the duties of that post.

Thus it happens that of Count von Waldersee, who is one of the most important military officers in the world, not much is known save that he is now grey and bald, and has for his wife a very astute and influential American lady.

Twenty-seven years ago an elderly prince of the Schleswig-Holstein family produced a temporary sensation by renouncing his ancestral rank, in order to marry a beautiful young Miss Lee, whom he had met at Paris. He was then just the age of the century—sixty-four—and the bride, who, with true American courage, states the year of her birth in the *Almanach de Gotha*, was twenty-six. Less than a year later the bridegroom, who had been given the title of Prince de Noër at the Austrian Court, died in Syria. Nine years afterwards—in 1874—his widow married Count Waldersee, and went to Berlin to live.

It happened, in 1881, that young Prince William of Prussia was wedded to a Schleswig-Holstein Princess, to whom the Countess Waldersee, by her first marriage, stood in the relation of great-aunt. Young William and Waldersee were already friends. This connection between their wives led to a closer intimacy, the results of which have been tremendous in Germany.

I have said that the home of the Waldersees now became the centre of the rising opposition to

the Bismarcks. Count Waldersee himself represented the ancient Prussian nobles' traditions of an absolute monarchy and a Hohenzollern's unlimited kingly power—traditions which were all at war with this Bismarckian usurpation of authority. The Countess Waldersee, with the privilege of an American, was able to gather into association with this aristocratic conservatism many elements in German political life which, under any other roof than hers, would have been antagonistic. Here it was that the women's conclave was formed—the young Empress Victoria and her widowed mother-in-law, the Empress Frederic, joining hands with the Countess Waldersee—with the blessing of the aged Empress Augusta, who all her life long had hated Bismarck, resting upon their work.

Bismarck had been supreme for so many years, and had put so many of these feminine cabals under his feet in bygone days, that he failed to recognize the deadly peril which confronted him in this newly-unmasked battery. He proceeded to charge upon it with all his old recklessness of confidence, and with his accustomed weapons of newspaper insults, personal browbeatings and threats to resign. To his great bewilderment nothing gave way. He had come at last upon a force greater than himself. He maintained the struggle for over a year—scornfully at first, and

later with a despairing tenacity as pitiful as it was undignified, until at last he was fairly cudgeled off the field.

This was the trick of it: Bismarck, in all his extended series of conquests over previous attacks by the women of the Court, had had the King at his back. He was supported by old William in his long campaign against the old Empress and the English Crown Princess. He had had the sanction of young William in his warfare upon the Empress Frederic. It had been with royal consent that he bore himself like the foremost man in Prussia, and he had allowed himself to forget the importance of this fact. The tables were completely turned upon him the instant these adroit and sagacious women whispered in young William's ear, "Why not be foremost man in Prussia yourself?"

The young Kaiser's thirtieth birthday came on January 27, 1889. We can put down to about that date his advance to an independent position in front of everybody else in his kingdom—including the Bismarcks. No single striking event marked the change; but the feeling that the change had come spread with strange swiftness throughout the length and breadth of Germany. The half-intuitive sense that Bismarck was done for ran like wildfire over the country. The Iron Chancellor for thirty years had done his best to

reduce German manhood to the serf-like condition of the courtier, and it is proverbial that there is no other keenness of scent like that of courtiers for the fall of a favourite.

The open reconciliation between William and his mother belongs to a somewhat later period, but the spirit of it was already in the air. The terrible news of the death of Crown Prince Rudolph of Austria, which came on January 30th, is also to be taken into account as bearing upon this change at Berlin. The Austrian heir-apparent was only six months older than William, and of late years they had not been friends. Rudolph had been peculiarly intimate with the Prince of Wales and with the late Emperor Frederic, and had not concealed his sympathy with the English view of William's behaviour. His tragic ending now produced the most painful and softening effect upon the emotional young Kaiser. He could only be restrained from going *incognito* to the funeral at Vienna by the urgent pleas of the stricken Austrian Emperor, and he made obviously sincere expressions of grief to the friends of the Prince of Wales, which went far toward removing the ill-feelings between them.

As it became apparent that the young Kaiser had thrown off his Bismarckian leading-strings, and, after a miserable interlude of small personal persecutions and revenges, was at last coming to

comprehend the vastness of his duties and responsibilities, the world began watching him with an interest of another sort.

It was not easy for outsiders to follow with much clearness the details of the fight which Bismarck was now making to retain his position and prestige. No one but a German politician could understand the excitement about the appointment of the National Liberal, von Bennigsen, to the Governorship of Hanover—an act, by the way, which definitely ranged the ultra-Tories against Bismarck—or apprehend the significance of Bismarck's fruitless attempts to secure the dismissal of Court Chaplain Stöcker, who was too much a partisan of Waldersee's. The general public preferred rather to study the personality of the young Kaiser as revealed by his individual acts and utterances.

William's fondness for travelling had from the first attracted attention. It is not generally known that in order to gratify this taste he at the beginning of his reign decided to devote to it the money which would be saved by foregoing a coronation ceremony. This decision accorded with historic Prussian precedents. From the year 1701, when Prussia was raised to royal estate, and the first King was crowned with such memorable and costly pomp at Königsberg, no Hohenzollern had a coronation ceremony until William I

put the crown upon his own head in October of 1861. Each of the intervening monarchs held instead what is called a *Hudligung*, or solemn homage from the assembled representatives of the estates of the realm—a curious ceremonial relic from feudal times which survived into the present century in its antique form as a public function in the Schloss Platz. William I's avowed reason for breaking over the rule was that during his predecessor's reign a Constitution had been promulgated in Prussia, and that this new-fangled innovation rendered it necessary to remind people anew of the powers and prerogatives of the monarch by visible signs of crown and sceptre.

Young William was so enthusiastic a follower of his grandfather that people assumed he would imitate him in this, all the more because his own tastes are toward display. Upon this theory there has been a great deal printed about a forthcoming coronation which never comes. Only last year an unusually impressive statement appeared to the effect that William, moved by meditating upon the historic splendours of the old Holy Roman Empire, intended to have himself crowned German Emperor in the famous mediæval church of the ancient imperial city of Frankfort-on-the-Main. The idea is a beautiful one, but there is no fact at the back of it. According to William's present intention, he will not be crowned at all.

In the restless course of his travels during these first six months William had made numerous speeches, almost every one of which contained a sentence or two of enough significance to be reprinted everywhere. As a rule his utterances at foreign Courts were polite and amiable to a fault, while his speeches at home, made among cheering after-dinner audiences in various parts of Germany, were characterized by much violent extravagance of language. The most intemperate of these harangues were reserved for his State visits to the provincial divisions of Prussia. At the beginning of last year, on the occasion of a visit of this nature to Königsberg, capital of East Prussia, he was led by his enthusiasm into so fervid a strain of eloquence, and flourished the metaphorical sword so recklessly, that one of the Russian papers ironically congratulated the world upon the fact that Prussia only had thirteen provinces, and that the Kaiser had now exhausted the rhetorical possibilities of eleven of them.

The earliest and most interesting of these speeches was delivered at Frankfurt-am-Oder just two months after his accession. He referred of his own volition to the undoubtedly foolish talk that had been heard during his father's brief reign, of Frederic's alleged idea of giving back Alsace-Lorraine, an imputation which William characterized as shameful to his father's memory.

"There is upon this point but one mind," he went on amid loud hurrahs, "namely, that our eighteen army corps, and our 42,000,000 people should be left upon the field rather than that we should permit a solitary stone of what we have gained to be taken from us."

Equally characteristic, and perhaps even more important as a clue to the manner in which the young Kaiser's conceptions of his position shaped themselves, was his celebrated rebuke to the Burgomaster and municipal authorities of Berlin, which has for its date, October 28 1888. That we may the better comprehend this, it will be well to glance for a moment at the remarkable development of the new Berlin.

Twenty years ago—that is to say, when the Empire was founded—Berlin was of course much the largest city within the new German boundaries, but it was scarcely a capital in the sense that Paris, Vienna, or London is. Frankfurt-am-Main was the great banking centre of Germany; Hamburg was its commercial metropolis; Dresden, Hanover, Stuttgart, Wiesbaden, and even smaller towns were more esteemed as places of fashionable residence and resort. Berlin was big and powerful, and rich in manufactures, no doubt, but nobody thought of it as beautiful or attractive, and nobody wanted to live there who could maintain himself in pleasanter surroundings.

The change which has been wrought in all this since 1870 is only to be matched by the phenomenal growth of great cities in the American West. Europe has seen nothing like it before. Within these twenty years Berlin has grown like a veritable Chicago. And not only has it attracted to itself hundreds of thousands of new citizens, and spread itself out on the Brandenburg plain over new square miles of stately brick and mortar and asphalt, but it has sapped the pre-eminence of its more ancient rivals, each in its speciality. Berlin has so absorbed the monetary power of the Empire that Frankfort is now scarcely thought of as a banking centre at all, and even Amsterdam and Paris are dwarfed financially. In similar fashion, the German nobility and wealthy classes, instead of scattering their town homes among a dozen local centres of social life, swarm now all to Berlin, and bid so strenuously for available building sites that prices for land and houses and floor rents are higher there than anywhere else in Europe.

Obviously, it is the establishment of the imperial Court in Berlin which has done this, and both the strength and weakness of the imperial system are reflected in greatest perfection of form and colour in the social conditions of this mighty new metropolis.

The enormous concentration here of rich or

pretentious young nobles in the various regiments of the Guard Corps; of the ablest and most influential soldiers of Germany in the General Staff and the central military offices; of the cleverest politicians and administrators in the various civic departments, and of the great aristocratic and monied classes who must live where the Court is settled and the Reichstag meets and the finance of Europe is controlled—all this makes Berlin a peculiarly responsive mirror of the ideas and methods of German government.

In turn Berlin has imposed its character with increasing force upon the whole German people. The dear old indolent, amiable, incapable, happy-go-lucky, waltz-loving Vienna used to be the type of what people had in mind when they spoke of the sentimental German. Berlin has made Vienna seem now as remote and non-German almost as Pesth itself, and instead has impressed its own strongly-marked individuality upon the new Empire—energetic, exact, harsh under slight provocation, methodical as the multiplication table, coldly just to law-abiding people, and a fire-and-steel terror to everybody else.

As might be naturally expected in this bustle of busy officials, of bankers and merchants burdened with a novel wealth, of the ceaseless rattle of bayonets and clatter of swords and spurs, art and literature are pretty well pushed to the wall. The

vast new growth of Berlin and the rush toward it of German wealth, rank, and fashion, have drawn in their train a certain current of painters and writers, but nothing at all in proportion with the expansion in other lines of activity. Berlin's new supremacy has not affected Leipsic as the book centre of German-speaking people, or Munich and Düsseldorf as homes of art study.

These changes may come, too, in time, particularly if the young Emperor exerts himself to achieve such an end. Up to the present, he has been too busy even to think of such a thing. The exactions of his daily routine of labour are so great that he simply has no time for the softer and more intellectual side of life, even if the taste were there. He has found leisure to sit for several portraits since his accession, but that seems to have been the sum of his attention to art. As for literature, an observant official in Berlin assured me of his conviction that William had not had the time to read a single book since his accession.

Whatever may come in the future, it is undeniable that the author now cuts a poor figure in Berlin. The city's drift is toward material things —toward business, official rank, and martial perfection. Even the most prosperous and popular writers of books in Berlin strive to obtain some small post in the civil service in order to command social position. Among many instances of this

brought to my notice one will serve as an illustration. Ernst von Wilderbruch is the most successful of contemporary Berlin playwrights, but on his card you will read that he is a Counsellor of Legation at the Foreign Office. This office yields him a salary equal to a twentieth part of his income from his plays, but it is of the greatest importance to him because it insures his rank. Here in England Edmund Gosse has an official place—just as in Boston Robert Grant holds a post in the municipal service. But can you fancy either of these gentlemen putting the fact on his card, or preferring to be known as an official rather than as a writer?

Even the splendid University of Berlin exerts a liberalizing influence rather through the public political attitude of its professors than by the diffusion of literary tastes among the community. This fact, together with the recollections which associate the late Emperor Frederic with bookish people, and the irritated consciousness that a very large proportion of Germany's present authors are Jews and Radicals, gives the contemptuous attitude of Berlin's aristocratic and military classes toward literature a decided political twist.

This is rendered the more marked by the overwhelming Radicalism of the city's electorate. The immense balloon-like rise of the value of land, and the tremendous race to erect buildings everywhere,

brought to the city a great concourse of artizans and labourers from all parts of Germany. Competition gave them big wages, but it also incited the formation of powerful trades' unions, the best of which were in effect Radical clubs, and the worst of which became centres of Socialist agitation. Berlin has six members in the Reichstag, of which four are Radicals, or *Freisinnige*, and two are Social Democrats. One of the Radicals is Prof. Rudolph Virchow, and one of the Socialists is Paul Singer, a Jew. The municipal institutions of Berlin, so far as they depend upon the popular vote, are also in the hands of the Radicals.

So much for the new Berlin. On Oct. 28, 1888, William, who had just returned from his Italian visit, the last of his series of journeys for that year, received the Burgomaster and a delegation from the Town Council, who came to the Schloss to congratulate him upon his return. They presented an effusively loyal address, clearly intended as a peace-offering from the Radical city to the new sovereign, and announced the intention of erecting a great fountain in the Schloss-Platz to commemorate the event.

William received this polite expression with studied insolence. After ironically commenting upon the unexpectedness of such a demonstration, he brasquely told them to build more churches in Berlin and to choke off their Radical editors, who,

during his absence, had shamelessly discussed the most private affairs of his family. He had been particularly angered by their insistence upon drawing comparisons between himself and his late father, an affront which he would not longer tolerate. He was about to take up his residence in Berlin, and "considering the relations which existed between the municipal authorities of Berlin and this Radical section of the press," he concluded that his hearers could stop this editorial impudence if they liked. Their address was full of loyal professions; very well, let them put these into practice.

Having said this in his roughest manner, William turned on his heel and left the room without shaking hands with the Burgomaster or so much as nodding to his colleagues.

This happened four months or so before the change in the young Kaiser's views and attitude which has been dealt with above. It is not out of place here, however, because, although William was now swiftly and with steady progress to alter his opinions on most other public subjects, he has not even yet altogether outgrown the notion that editors ought to wear muzzles.

CHAPTER VIII.

A YEAR OF EXPERIMENTAL ABSOLUTISM.

THE young Emperor's dislike for the press was indeed a fruitful source of sensational incidents during the first year or two of his reign, and still is uneasily felt to contain the elements of possibly further disturbance. The fault of this attitude is by no means entirely on one side. Both the character of the Kaiser and the character of the German press are in large part what Bismarck has made them, and if their less admirable sides clash and grind into each other with painful friction from time to time, it is only what might be expected. During Bismarck's twenty-eight years of power in Prussia he so by turns debauched and coerced the press that the adjective "reptile" had to be invented by outsiders properly to describe its venomous cowardice. He openly and contemp-

tuously prostituted it to serve his poorest and pettiest uses, so that it was not possible for any one to think of it with respect; yet, oddly enough, he always showed the keenest and most thin-skinned sensitiveness when its attacks or inuendoes were aimed at himself.

This whimsical susceptibility to affront in the printed word, no matter how mean or trivial the force back of it, is a trait which has often come near making Bismarck ridiculous, and it is not pleasant to note how largely William seems also to be possessed with it. He is as nervous about what the papers will say as a young *débutante* on the stage. Not only does he keep an anxious watch upon the talk of the German editors, but he ordains a vigilant scrutiny of the articles printed in foreign countries from the pens of correspondents stationed at Berlin. In this he is very German. Nobody in England, for example, ever dreams of caring about, or for the most part of even taking the trouble to learn, what is printed abroad about English personages or politics. The foreign correspondents in London are as free as the wind that blows. But matters were ordered very differently at the beginning of the present reign in Berlin, and to this day journalists pursue their calling there under a sense of espionage hardly to be imagined in Fleet Street. It is true that a change for the better is distinctly visible of

late, but it will be the work of many years to eradicate the low views of German journalism which Bismarck instilled, alike, unfortunately, in the royal palaces and the editorial offices of Prussia.

One of the very first acts of William's reign was the expulsion from Berlin of two French journalists whose sympathetic accounts of his father's dismissal of Puttkamer had been distasteful to the royal eye. In the following January the correspondents of the *Figaro* and *National* of Paris were similarly driven out. In March, 1889, simultaneously with the seizure of the Berlin *Volks-Zeitung* and the prosecution of the *Freisinnige Zeitung*, a new Penal Code was presented to the Reichstag which contained such arbitrary provisions for stamping out the remaining liberties of the press that even the Cologne *Gazette* denounced it as "putting a frightful weapon into the hands of the Government for suppressing freedom of speech and silencing opposition." This measure did not pass, but the odium of having introduced it remained.

Although in other respects William was already observed to be separating himself from his Chancellor, it is clear that he has a large share in this odium. All his utterances, both at this time and up to the present date, show how thoroughly he believes in editing the editors. This tendency was during the year 1889 to exhibit its comical side.

The special organ of the Waldersee party was the high-and-dry old Tory journal, the *Kreuz-Zeitung*. Early in the year this mouthpiece of the anti-Bismarck coalition was raided by the Chancellor, and both its offices and the house of its editor, Baron Hammerstein, ransacked for incriminating documents. The Kaiser is believed to have intervened to prevent more serious steps being taken. Later in the year, as the success of the Waldersee combination in weaning the Kaiser away from Bismarck grew more and more marked, the *Kreuz-Zeitung* foolishly gave voice to its elation, and attacked the "Cartel" coalition of parties which controlled the Reichstag. The Kaiser thereupon printed a personal *communique* in the official paper saying that he approved of the "Cartel" and was "unable to reconcile the means by which the *Kreuz-Zeitung* assailed it with respect for his own person." This warning proved insufficient, for in the following January Baron Hammerstein put up as a candidate for a vacancy at Bielefeld, and talked so openly about being the real nominee of the Kaiser that William caused to be inserted in all the papers a notice of his order that the *Kreuz-Zeitung* should not henceforth be taken at any of the royal palaces, or allowed in public reading-rooms. It may be imagined how the Liberal editors chuckled over this.

So recently as in May of last year, two months

after the retirement of Bismarck, when the regular official deputation from the new Reichstag waited upon William, he pointed out to the Radical members that the *Freisinnige* press was criticizing the army estimates, which he and his generals had made as low as possible, and sharply warned them to see that a stop was put to such conduct on the part of their friends, the Radical editors. And only last December, in his remarkable speech to the Educational Conference, he lightly grouped journalists with the "hunger candidates" and others who formed an over-educated class "dangerous to society."

This inability to tolerate the expression of opinions different from his own is very Bismarckian. The ex-Chancellor, in fact, has for years past acted and talked upon the theory that anybody who did not agree with him must of necessity be unpatriotic, and came at last to hurl the epithet of *Reichsfeind*—enemy of the Empire—every time any one disputed him on any point whatsoever.

William has roughly shorn away Bismarck's pretence to infallibility, but about the divine nature of his own claims he has no doubt. Some of his deliverances on questions of morals and ethics, in his capacity as a sort of helmeted Northern Pope, are calculated to bring a smile to the face of the Muse of History. His celebrated

harangue to the Rector of the Berlin University, Professor Gebhardt, wherein he complained that, under the lead of democratic professors, the students were filled with destructive political doctrines, and concluded by gruffly saying, "Let your students go more to churches and less to beer cellars and fencing saloons"—was put down to his youth, for it dates from the close of 1888. It is interesting to note, from William's recent speech at Bonn, that he has decidedly altered his views on both beer-drinking and duelling among students. He began his reign, however, with ultra-puritanical notions on these as well as other subjects.

Long after this early deliverance his confidence in himself, so far from suffering abatement, had so magnified itself that he called the professors of another University together and lectured them upon the bad way in which they taught history. He had discovered, he said, that there was now much fondness for treating the French Revolution as a great political movement, not without its helpful and beneficent results. This pernicious notion must no longer be encouraged in German universities, but students should be taught to regard the whole thing as one vast and unmitigated crime against God and man.

In this dogmatic phase of his character William is much more like Frederic William I than like any of his nearer ancestors in the Hohenzollern

line. These later monarchs, beginning with Frederic the Great and following his luminous example, were habitually chary about bothering themselves with their subjects' opinions. William at one time thought a good deal upon the fact that he was a successor of Frederic the Great, and by fits and starts set himself to imitate the earlier acts of that sovereign. His restless flying about from place to place, and, even more clearly, his edicts rebuking the army officers for gambling and for harshness to their men, were copied from that illustrious original. But in his attitude toward the mental and moral liberty of his subjects he goes back a generation to Frederic's father—and suggests to us also the reflection that he is a grandson of that highly self-confident gentleman whom English-speaking people knew as the Prince Consort.

Frederic the Great had so little of this spirit in him that he made himself memorably unique among eighteenth-century sovereigns by allowing such freedom to the press that liberty sank into license, and the most scandalous and mendacious attacks upon his personal life were printed in and hawked about Berlin to the end of his days. As for his refusal to interfere in the alleged perversion of Protestant children by Catholic teachers, his comment on the margin of the ministerial complaint, "In this country every man must get to

heaven in his own way," is justly cherished to this day as worth all his other writings put together.

William's spasms, so to speak, of imitative loyalty to the memories of his ancestors have been productive of many curious, not to say diverting, results. Their progressive consecutiveness is not always easy to make out, but they afford, as a whole, very interesting insights into the young man's temperament.

When tragic chance thrust him forward and upon the throne, his youthful imagination happened to be in some mysterious way under the spell of that most astounding of all his forefathers, Frederic William I. He spoke frequently with enthusiasm of the character of this rude, choleric barbarian, and even brought himself to believe that there was something fine in that strange creature's inability to speak any language but German. It was under the sway of this admiration for the second Prussian King that William, in January of 1889, had all the French cooks in his palaces discharged, and ordered that hereafter the royal bill of fare should be a *Speisekarte*, with the names of dishes in German, instead of the accustomed *menu* in French. It will not, however, have escaped notice that William is a changeable young man, and this ultra-Teutonic mood did not last very long. In the following autumn he had so far recovered from it that his visit to Constanti-

nople was reported to have been marred by the Sultan's mistaken hospitality in giving him nothing but German champagnes to drink. It must be admitted, however, that scarcely the most robust prejudice could stand out long under such a test.

In the spring of 1890 there came the 150th anniversary of the accession of Frederic the Great, and with it a sudden shift in the young Kaiser's admiration. For a long time thereafter he made no speech without alluding to this most splendid figure in Prussian history, and quoting him as an example to be followed with reverential loyalty.

Then in December came the turn of still a third bygone Hohenzollern. It was on December 1, 1640, that the youth of twenty, who was later to be known as the Great Elector, entered upon the herculean task of saving hapless, bankrupt little Brandenburg from literal annihilation. William has told us that as a boy he scarcely learned anything at all about this illustrious ancestor of his. Apparently little had been done to make good this lack of information up to the time when, toward the close of 1890, he found that the Great Elector's 250th anniversary was near at hand, and felt that it ought to be celebrated. He began reading the history of that memorable reign, and was at once excitedly interested and impressed. There has always been a charming, if childish, *naivetè* about the manner in which William frankly exposes his

mental processes, and, having just heard of something for the first time which everybody else knows, brings it forward to public notice as if it were a fresh and most remarkable discovery. The effect produced upon him by his belated introduction to the life and works of the last Elector affords an apt illustration of this tendency. At the celebration William made a long speech in eulogy of his ancestor, which in every sentence seemed to take it for granted that heretofore no one had written or thought or known about the Great Elector. Since that time the young Emperor has rarely spoken in public, at least to a Prussian audience, without some reference to this distinguished predecessor—whereas we never hear now of either Frederic the Great or his savage father.

Doubtless the fervour with which William has adopted the Great Elector as his model ancestor is in large part due to the fact that the latter's first important act was the summary dismissal of his father's Prime Minister, Schwarzenberg. The parallel to be drawn between the disgrace of this powerful favourite and the fall of Bismarck is often faulty and nowhere exact, but it is evident that it impressed William's imagination greatly when he came upon it, and that he could not resist the temptation to suggest it to the world at large. In this same anniversary speech he said: "My stout ancestor had no one to lean upon.

The eminent statesman who had served his predecessor was revealed to have worked for his own personal ends, and the young sovereign was forced to mark out his own path unaided." The comparison was a cruel one, because the manner in which Schwarzenberg "worked for his own personal ends" was that of taking bribes to betray his royal master and his country. Yet the loose phrase could also describe Bismarck's hot-headed use of his vast governmental powers to crush his individual enemies, and in this sense every one felt that William was instituting a comparison.

But this embittered remark belongs to a much later period than has as yet come under our view, and marks an acute stage of the dramatic and momentous quarrel between Kaiser and Chancellor, of the dawning of which there were only vague anticipatory rumours in 1889.

CHAPTER IX.

A YEAR OF HELPFUL LESSONS.

THE first few months of 1889 present nothing of special note to the observer. There was perhaps a trifle more nervousness on the bourses during that early spring-time which, for some occult reason, is the chosen season of alarmist war rumours, than had been usual in the lifetime of the old Kaiser, but this signified no more than a vague uneasiness born of the sword-clanking reputation which had preceded William's accession to the throne. The surface of events at Berlin seemed smooth enough, although dissensions and jealousies were warring fiercely underneath. Everybody was talking about the tremendous battle going on between the Bismarcks and the Waldersees, but of public evidence of this conflict there was none. This very reticence

shows that the Chancellor must thus early have become impressed with the menacing power of the combinations confronting him, for it was never his habit to be silent about quarrels in which he was confident of victory. He must have become truly alarmed when, on February 25th, he gave a great dinner, at which the Kaiser and Waldersee were the principal guests. So far from creating a false impression of cordiality, this banquet, with its incongruous people and its hollow gaiety, only strengthened the notion that Bismarck was toppling.

In May, however, two things happened which at the time much occupied the world's attention —the abortive Strasburg visit incident, and the great miners' strike in Westphalia. These two episodes are particularly noteworthy in that they for the first time show us William confronted by something bigger than questions of personal politics and individual piques and prejudices. A dangerous international quarrel and a threatening domestic convulsion loomed up suddenly side by side before him—and the experience left him a wiser and more serious man.

To glance first at the incident which, creating the greater furor at the time, has left the slighter mark upon history—the King of Italy, with his son and his Premier, came, on May 21st, to visit William in Berlin. There were many reasons

why the reception extended to him should have been, as indeed it was, of the most affectionate and enthusiastic character. The old Emperor William had grown to be considered at the Quirinal as Victor Emmanuel's best friend, and Prussia was proudly pleased to be thought of as the chief protector and sponsor of young United Italy. The more romantic Frederic had cultivated a highly sentimental intimacy, later on, with King Humbert and Queen Marguerite, and had made all Rome a party to it by that celebrated spectacular appearance on the balcony of the Quirinal with the little Italian Crown Prince in his arms. Thus peculiarly emotional ties bound Humbert now to Frederic's son, and his coming to Berlin was hailed as the arrival of a warm personal friend even more than as the advent of a powerful ally.

It may have been from mere lightness of heart —conceivably there was a deeper motive—but at all events William proposed to this good friend that on his way home they should together visit Strasburg, and the amiable Humbert, a slow, patient, honest fellow, consented. The assertion has since been authoritatively made by Italian statesmen that the idea really originated with the adventurous Italian Premier, Crispi, and that Bismarck and William merely fell in with it. However that may be, it is a fact that the visit

was agreed upon, and that orders were despatched to Strasburg to make things ready for the royal party.

When the news of this intended trip became public, its effect was that of a shock of earthquake. During the twenty-four hours which elapsed before the frightened Crispi could issue a statement that the report of such a visit was a pure Bourse canard, Europe was sensibly nearer a war than at any time in the last fifteen years. The French press raised a clamorous and vibrant call to arms, and the politicians of Rome and Vienna kept the wires to Berlin hot with panic-stricken protests. What it all meant was, of course, that Europe has tacitly consented to regard the possession of Alsace-Lorraine as an open question, to be finally settled when France and Germany fight next time. Upon this understanding, no outside sovereign has formally sanctioned the annexation of 1871 by appearing in person within the disputed territory. King Humbert's violation of this point of international etiquette would have been a deliberate blow in the face of the French Republic. Luckily he had the courage to draw back when the lightnings began playing upon his path, and with diminishing storm mutterings the cloud passed away. Its net result had been to show the world William's foolhardiness in favouring such a wanton insult to France, and his humiliation in having

publicly to abandon an advertised intention—and the spectacle was not reassuring.

The episode is chiefly interesting now because it seems to have been of great educational value to the young Emperor. It really marked out for him, in a striking object lesson, the grave international limitations by which his position is hemmed in. He has never since made another such false step. Indeed the solitary other cause of friction between France and Germany which has arisen during his reign proceeded from an action of a diametrically opposite nature—to wit, an attempt to conciliate instead of offend.

Of much more permanent importance in the history of William and of his Empire was the great miners' strike in Westphalia, which may be said to have begun on the 1st of May. This tremendous upheaval of labour at one time involved the idleness of over 100,000 men—by no means all miners or all Westphalians. The shortened coal supply affected industries everywhere, and other trades struck because the spirit of mutiny was in the air. In many districts the military were called out to guard the pits' mouths, and sanguinary conflicts with the strikers ensued.

Evidently this big convulsion took William completely by surprise. Up to this time he had been deeply engrossed in the spectacular side of his position—the showy and laborious routine of

an Emperor who is also a practical working soldier. Such thought as he had given to the great economic problems pressing for solution all about him, seems to have been of the most casual sort and cast wholly in the Bismarckian mould. What Bismarck's views on this subject were and are, is well known. He believes that over-education has filled the labouring classes of Germany with unnatural and unreasonable discontent, which is sedulously played upon by depraved Socialist agitators, and that the only way to deal with the trouble is to imprison or banish as many of these latter as possible, and crush out the disaffection by physical force wherever it manifests itself. He decorates this position with varying sophistical frills and furbelows from time to time, but in its essence that is what he thinks. And up to May of 1889 that is apparently what William thought, too.

The huge proportions of this sudden revolt of labour made William nervous, however, and in this excited state he was open to new impressions. The anti-Bismarck coalition saw their chance and swiftly utilized it. With all haste they summoned Dr. Hinzpeter from his home at Bielefeld, and persuaded William to confer with his old tutor upon this alarming industrial complication, with which it was clearly enough to be seen his other advisers did not know how to deal. No exact date is given

for the interview which William had with Dr. Hinzpeter, but the day upon which it was held should be a memorable one in German history. For then dawned upon the mind of the young Kaiser that dream of Christian Socialism with the influence of which we must always thereafter count.

It is true that the angered and dispossessed ex-Chancellor declares now that William never was morally affected by the painful aspects of the labour question, and that he took the side of the workmen solely because he thought it would pay politically. But men who know the Kaiser equally well, and who have the added advantage of speaking dispassionately, say that the new humanitarian views which Dr. Hinzpeter now unfolded to him took deep hold upon his imagination, and made a lasting mark upon his character. Even if the weight of evidence were not on its side, one would like to believe this rather than the cynical theory propounded from Friedrichsruh.

William did not become a full-fledged economic philosopher all at once under this new influence. There was a great deal of the rough absolutist in the little harangue he delivered to the three working-men delegates who, on May 14th, were admitted to his presence to lay the case of the strikers before him. He listened gravely to their recital of grievances, asked numerous questions,

and seemed considerably impressed. When their spokesman had finished he said that he was anxiously watching the situation, had ordered a careful inquiry into all the facts, and would see that evenhanded justice was done. Then, in a sharper voice, he warned them to avoid like poison all Socialist agitators, and specially to see to it that there were no riots or attempts to prevent the non-strikers from working. If this warning was not heeded, he concluded, in high peremptory tones, he would send his troops "to batter and shoot them down in heaps."

It must be admitted that this sentiment does not touch the high-water mark of Christian Socialism, but the drift of the Kaiser's mind was obviously forward. Two days later he received a delegation of mine masters, and to them spoke rather bitterly of the perversity and greed of capitalists, and their selfish unwillingness to "make certain sacrifices in order to terminate this perilous and troublous state of things." On May 17th it was announced that Dr. Hinzpeter had been commissioned to travel through the disturbed districts and report to the Kaiser upon the origin and merits of the strike. This practically settled the matter. The masters as a whole made concessions, under which work was resumed. Those owners who displayed stubbornness were in one way or another made to feel the imperial

displeasure, and soon the trouble was at an end. It is worthy of note that Germany has since that time been far less agitated by labour troubles than any of the states by which she is surrounded, and that upon the occasion of the recent May-day demonstrations German workmen were practically the only ones on the Continent who did not come into collision with the police.

But, after all, the vitally important thing was the reappearance of Dr. Hinzpeter, involving, as it did, the revival in the young Kaiser's daily thoughts and moods of the gentle and softening influences of those old school days at Cassel, before Bonn and the Bismarcks came to harden and pervert.

Upon the heels of the Strasburg incident followed another flurry in international politics, which for the moment seemed almost as menacing, and which hurried forward a highly significant step on the part of William.

The precipitate haste with which the young Kaiser had rushed off to visit St. Petersburg, almost before the public signs of mourning for his father had been removed in Berlin and Potsdam, had impressed everybody as curious. Nearly a year had now elapsed, and the failure of the Czar to say anything about returning the visit was growing to seem odder still. It was, of course,

no secret that the Czar did not like William. No two men could present greater points of difference, physically and mentally. The autocrat of all the Russias is a huge, lumbering, slow, and tenacious man, growing somewhat fat with increasing years, hating all forms of regular exercise, and cherishing a veritable horror of noisy, overzealous, and bustling people. Every smart public servant in Russia is governed by the knowledge that his imperial master has a peculiar aversion to all forms of bother, and values his officials precisely in proportion as they make short and infrequent reports, free from all accounts of unpleasant things, and, still more important, from all meddlesome suggestions of reform. When a Russian diplomat was asked, a year ago, what the Czar's personal attitude toward William was, he answered expressively by shrugging his shoulders and putting his fingers in his ears.

But now the Czar, from passively affronting William by not returning his visit, summoned the energy for a direct provocation. A palace luncheon was given in St. Petersburg, celebrating the betrothal of a Montenegrin Princess to a Russian Grand Duke, and the Czar, standing and in a loud, clear voice, drank to Prince Nikolo of Montenegro as "the only sincere and faithful friend Russia had" among European sovereigns. That there might be no doubt about this, the Czar had

the words printed next day in the *Official Messenger*.

Germany was not slow to comprehend the meaning of this remarkable speech. But to make it still clearer the Czarowitch, three weeks later, paid a formal visit to Stuttgart to attend some Court festivities, and passed through Berlin both going and coming—though the Breslau-Dresden route would have been more direct—apparently for no other purpose than to insult the Kaiser by stopping for an hour each time inside the railway station, as if there were no such people as the Hohenzollerns to so much as leave a card upon. As a capstone to this insolence, the Russian officers of his suite refused to drink the toast to the German Empire at the Stuttgart banquet, and, when a dispute arose, left the room in a body.

The immediate effect of this was to remove the last vestige of reserve existing between William and his English relatives. He at once sent word that, if convenient, he would visit his grandmother, the Queen, at the beginning of August. An assurance of hearty welcome was as promptly returned.

This decision marked another stage in the decline of Bismarck's power. We have seen how he had been gradually pushed aside in the management of German internal affairs. Now the Kaiser was to break through the dearest traditions of Bis-

marck's foreign policy—the cultivation of Russian amiability at whatever cost of dignity, and the contemptuous snubbing of England. With a fatal inability to distinguish between the promptings of passion and the dictates of true policy, the Chancellor had been led into a position where he could maintain himself only if every one of the elements and chances combined to play his game for him, and keep William at daggers-drawn with all things English. The miracle did not happen. As we have seen, even the Czar took it into his head to interfere to the damage of Bismarck's plans.

So the perplexed and baffled old Chancellor, noting with new rage and mortification how power was slipping from his hands, yet helpless to do other than fight doggedly to hold what yet remained, stopped behind in Berlin, the while Kaiser William steamed at the head of his splendid new squadron into Portsmouth Harbour, and the very sea shook with the thunderous cannon roar of his welcome. The world had never before seen such a show of fighting ships as was gathered before Cowes to greet him. There was one other thing which may be assumed to have been unique in human chronicles. William, in the exuberance of his delight at his really splendid reception, and at being created a British Admiral, issued a solemn imperial order making his grandmother a Colonel of Hussars.

The English did well to surround the young Kaiser's visit with all imaginable pomp and display of overwhelming naval force, for it meant very much more both to them and to him than any one is likely to have imagined at the time. The splendour of the material spectacle, and the sentimental interest attaching to the fact that this young man coming to greet his grandmother was the first German Emperor to set foot on English soil since the days of the Crusaders, were much dwelt upon in the press. To us who have been striving to trace the inner workings of the influences shaping the young man's character, the event has a nearer significance. It meant that William—having for years been estranged from the liberalizing English impulses and feelings of his boyish education; having since his majority exulted in the false notion that to be truly German involved hatred of all things English—had come to see his mistake.

It is not possible to exaggerate the importance of this visit, and of the causes leading up to it, upon William's mind. The Hohenzollerns, until within our own times the comparatively needy Princes of a poor country, have always been greatly impressed by the superior wealth and luxurious civilization of the English. The famous Double-Marriage project of Frederic William I's days was clung to in Berlin through years of

British snubs and rebuffs because thrifty Prussian eyes saw these islands through a golden mist. To the imagination of German royalty, English Princesses appear in the guise of fairies, not invariably beautiful, perhaps, but each bearing the purse of Fortunatus. This view of the English colours the thoughts of more lowly-born Germans. When Freytag[1] seeks to explain the late Kaiser Frederic's complete and almost worshipping subjection to his wife, he says: "She had come to him from superior surroundings."

William had tried hard, in his ultra-German days, to despise English wealth along with English political ideas. The theory of a Spartan severity, governing expenditure and all other conditions of daily life, was the keynote of his Teutonic period. But when he became Kaiser he had yielded to the temptation of getting the Reichstag to augment his annual civil list by 3,500,000 marks. That in itself considerably modified his austere hatred of luxury. Now, as the guest of the richest nation in the world, he was able to feel himself a relative, and wholly at home. The English conquest of William was complete.

No hint of unfilial conduct had been heard, now, for a long time, nor was henceforth to be heard. William had by this time become fully reconciled

[1] "The Crown Prince and the German Imperial Crown," p. 49.

to his mother, and in the following month, September of 1889, he purchased for and presented to her the Villa Reiss, a delightful summer *château* in the Taunus Mountains.

Thereafter a strong sympathy with England has manifested itself in all his actions. The Czar did at last, in the most frosty, formal manner, pay a brief visit to Berlin, and William the following year returned the courtesy by attending the Russian manœuvres, but this has not at all affected his open preference for English friendship. He always spoke German with an English accent —which now is more marked than ever.

He has a bewildering variety of uniforms, but the one which affords him the greatest pride is the dress of the British Admiral. He wears it whenever the least excuse offers. Upon his journey to Athens in October of 1889, to attend the wedding of his sister and the Greek Crown Prince, he was so much affected by his new English naval title that when he steamed into the classic Ægean Sea on his imperial yacht he flew the British Admiral's flag from her top. A British fleet was also there to participate in the ceremonies, and William took his new position so seriously, and had such delight in descending suddenly upon the squadron at unexpected and unreasonable hours, and routing everybody out for parade and inspection, that the British officers themselves revolted and preferred

an informal complaint to the British Minister. "This thing is played out," they said. "If he would merely wear the uniform and let it end with that, we shouldn't mind. But we didn't make him Admiral to worry the lives out of us in this fashion."

CHAPTER X.

THE FALL OF THE BISMARCKS.

WE have come now to a time when the effects of this reasserted English influence began to be apparent throughout Germany. Since his successful tour through the Westphalian strike district, Dr. Hinzpeter had been visibly growing in men's eyes as the new power behind the throne. Another friend of William's, Count William Douglas, began also to attract attention. This nobleman, ten years older than the Kaiser, and a capable writer and speaker as well as soldier is a descendant of one of the numerous Scotch cadets of aristocratic families who carried their swords into Continental service when the Stuarts were driven from the British throne. Both in appearance and temperament no one could be more wholly German than Count Douglas is, but his intimacy with William only became marked after the English visit.

Immediately upon his return from England, William delivered a speech at Münster in which he eulogized Hinzpeter as a representative Westphalian, whose splendid principles he had imbibed in his boyhood. During the ensuing autumn and winter the presence of Dr. Hinzpeter at the palace became so much a matter of comment that some of Bismarck's "reptile" papers began to complain that if the Westphalian was to exert such power he ought to take office so that he could be openly discussed.

Similar attacks were made by the Chancellor's organs upon Count Douglas, who had written a very complimentary pamphlet about the young Kaiser shortly after his accession, and who now, as an Independent Conservative, was thought to reflect the Kaiser's own political preferences. Public opinion bracketed Hinzpeter and Douglas together as the active forces at the head of the Waldersee coalition, and we shall see that William himself treated them as such when the time for action came.

New men had gradually supplanted old ones in many important official posts. The gentlest of soft hints had long since (in August of 1888) been borne in by a little bird to the aged Count von Moltke, and he, on the instant, with the perfect dignity and pure gentility of his nature, had responded with a request to be permitted to retire

from active labour. His letter, with its quaintly pathetic explanation that "I am no longer able to mount a horse," was answered with effusion by William, who visited him personally at his residence, and made him President of the National Defence Commission, *vice* the Emperor Frederic, deceased. Later events rendered it natural to contrast the loyal behaviour of the great soldier with the mutinous and perverse conduct of the statesman whose name is popularly linked with his, and during the last year of his life Moltke existed in a veritable apotheosis of demonstrative imperial affection, which indeed followed his coffin to the grave with such symbols of royal favour as no commoner's bier had ever before borne in Germany.

Somewhat later the Minister of Marine, General von Caprivi, received a delicate intimation that the Kaiser thought a soldier was out of place in charge of the navy, and he also promptly but gracefully resigned, and accepted the command of an army corps instead with cheerful obedience. It is a great gift to know when and how to get out, and Caprivi did it so amiably and intelligently that the Kaiser made a mental note of him as a good man to rely upon when the time should come.

General Bronsart von Schellendorf similarly resigned the War Ministry. He was a descendant of one of the large colony of Huguenot families

which took refuge in Berlin after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes—and it was a strange freak of Fate's irony which, in 1871, sent him as Colonel out from the German headquarters before Sedan to convey a demand for surrender to the French Emperor. Curiously enough he was succeeded now as Minister of War by another descendant of these exiled French Protestants, General von Verdy du Vernois, the ablest military writer of his generation, a notably clever organizer and a deservedly popular man.

Neither von Verdy nor Waldersee, who succeeded to Moltke's proud position as Chief of the General Staff, remained long in their new posts. The world had nothing but vague surmises as to the causes of their retirement, and, noting that they still retain the friendly regard of their sovereign, did not dally long with these. Here again the contrast forces itself upon public attention, for these two good soldiers and able administrators neither sought interviews with travelling correspondents in which to vent their grievances, nor inspired spiteful attacks in provincial newspapers against their young chief. They went loyally out of office, as they had entered it, and kept their silence.

Thus throughout the public service, civil and military alike, these changes went forward—the greybeards who had helped to create the Empire on the field or in the council-room, one by one

stepping down and out to make room for the new generation—but Bismarck, though becoming more and more isolated, clung resolutely to his place. It was no secret to him that the Kaiser's principal advisers and friends were keen to throw him out of the Chancellorship; it must have long been apparent to him that the Kaiser was accustoming his mind to thoughts of a Berlin without Bismarck. But the Iron Chancellor had neither the simple dignity of Moltke nor the shrewd suavity of Caprivi. He would not leave until he had been violently thrust forth, and even then he would stand on the doorstep and shout.

The opponents of Bismarck had long been gathering their forces for a grand attack. Their difficulty had been the unwillingness of the Kaiser definitely to give his assent to the overthrow of the great man. Often, in moments of impatience at the autocratic airs assumed by Bismarck and his son, William had seemed on the point of turning down his thumb as a signal for slaughter. But there always would come a realization of how mighty a figure in German history Bismarck truly was—and perhaps, too, some modified reassertion of the tremendous personal influence with which for years the Chancellor had magnetized him. Almost to the end the young man had recurring spasms of subjection to this old ideal of his youth. Even while he was sporting his British ensign in

Greek waters, and showing to the whole world how completely the breach between him and English royalty had been healed, he salved his conscience, as it were, by addressing enthusiastic and affectionate despatches to Bismarck from every new stopping-place on those classic shores.

But now, in January of 1890, the long-looked-for opportunity came. The natural term of the Reichstag elected in 1887—the last one chosen for only three years' service—was on the point of expiration. The anti-Socialist penal laws would lapse in September of 1890 unless renewed either by this dying Reichstag or, without delay, by its successor. Prince Bismarck was, of course, committed to their prompt and emphatic renewal. His enemies—another term for William's new friends—had secretly been preparing for the defeat of these laws in the Reichstag, and now, in the middle of the month, found that they had secured an absolute majority. They conveyed this fact to the Kaiser, with the obvious corollary that the time had arrived for him to take the popular lead in his Empire, and make an issue on this question with his Chancellor. William saw the point, and reluctantly took the decisive step.

Space permits only the most cursory glance at this parliamentary battlefield, whereon Bismarck had waged so many rough Berserker fights, and which now was to see his complete annihilation.

The Reichstag at Berlin is by no means powerful in the sense that Parliament is in London or Congress in Washington. It is a convention of spectacled professors, country nobles, and professional men desirous of advertisement or the pretence of employment, with a sprinkling of smart financiers and professional politicians who have personal ends to serve. They play at legislation—some seriously, others not—but as a rule what they do and say makes next to no difference whatever. They have not even the power of initiating legislation. That function belongs to the Bundesrath or Federal Council, which means the Prussian Ministry, which in turn meant Bismarck. His historic conception of law-making was to combine by bribes and threats a sufficient number of the fragmentary parties to constitute a majority, and to use this to pass his measures as far as it would go. Then he would swing around, create a different majority out of other groups, and carry forward another line of legislation. In turn he had been at the head of every important political faction and the enemy of each, and if he was unable to get his way through one combination always managed sooner or later to obtain it by a new shaking-up of the dice.

Parliamentary institutions were not always at this low estate in Prussia. Three hundred years ago the Brandenburg Diet was a strong and in-

fluential body, which stoutly held the purse-strings and gave the law to sovereigns. The Hohenzollerns broke it down, first by establishing and fostering *Stände*, or small local diets, to dispute its power and jurisdiction, and then, in 1652, by the Great Elector boldly putting his mailed heel on it as a nuisance. It still lingered on in a formal, colourless, ineffective fashion until in the time of Frederic William I, when it was contemptuously kicked out of sight. That stalwart despot explained this parting kick by saying: "I am establishing the King's sovereignty like a rock of bronze;" and, whatever its composition, there the rock stood indubitably in all men's sight for much more than a century, with neither parliaments to shake its foundations nor powerful ministers to crumble away its sides.

Bismarck had made it a condition of his acceptance of office in 1862 that he would govern Prussia without a Parliament. When the fortune of war and the federation of the states enlarged the scope of his responsibilities to the limits of the new Empire, he proceeded upon the same autocratic lines. There was a greater necessity, it is true, of pretending to defer to the parliamentary idea, but he never dissembled his disgust at this necessity. He bullied the leaders of the opposition factions with such open coarseness, imputing evil and dishonest motives, introducing

details of personal life which his spies had gathered, and using all the great powers at his command to insult and injure, that a large proportion of the educated and refined gentlemen of Germany, who should have been its natural political leaders, either declined to enter the Reichstag at all, or withdrew, disheartened and humiliated, after a brief term of service. All this reflected, and brought down in embodied form into our own times, the traditional attitude of the Hohenzollerns toward the poor thing called a Parliament.

It was therefore very much of an anachronism to find, in the year of grace 1890, a Prussian King invoking the aid of a Parliament to help him encompass the overthrow of his Prime Minister.

The situation on January 20th, briefly stated, was this: The Reichstag, consisting of 397 members, had been governed by Bismarck's "Cartel" combination of 94 National Liberals, 78 Conservatives, and 37 Imperialists, a clear majority of 21. The efforts of the Waldersee party, however, had honeycombed this majority with disaffection, and the National Liberals had been induced to agree that they would not vote for a renewal of the clause giving the Government power to expel obnoxious citizens. On the other hand, the Conservatives promised not to vote for the renewal of the anti-Socialist law at all unless it

contained the expulsion clause. Thus, of course, the measure was bound to fall between two stools. This apparent clashing of cross purposes might have been stopped in ten minutes if it had proceeded spontaneously from the two factions themselves. But everybody knew that it had been carefully arranged from above, and that the leader of each party had had an interview with the Kaiser. This affectation of irreconcilable views on the expulsion clause, therefore, deceived no one—least of all Prince Bismarck. He ostentatiously remained at Friedrichsruh until the very last day of the Reichstag; then, indeed, he arrived in Berlin, but did not deign to show himself at either the Chamber or the Schloss.

The National Liberals voted down the expulsion clause on January 23rd. Then the Conservatives, two days later, joined the Clerical, *Freisinnige*, and Socialist Parties in throwing out the whole measure. Thereupon the dissolution of the Reichstag was immediately announced, and the members proceeded to the Schloss to receive their formal dismissal from the Kaiser. William spoke somewhat more nervously than usual, but was extremely cordial in his manner. He praised the labours of the Reichstag, dwelt upon his desires to improve the condition of the working classes, and said never a word about the defeated Socialist laws. Everybody felt that the imperial

reticence and the absence of Bismarck portended big events.

Next week came the first overt movement in the struggle which all Germany now realized that Bismarck was waging for political life itself. He resigned his minor post as Prussian Minister of Commerce, and the place was promptly filled by the appointment of Baron Berlepsch. This selection was felt to be symbolical—because Berlepsch had been Governor of the Rhineland during the strikes, and had managed to preserve order without recourse to violence, and to gain the liking of the working men. To make the meaning of this promotion more clear, the Governor of Westphalia, who had rushed to declare his province in a state of siege when the strike broke out, and had called in soldiers to overawe the miners, was now curtly dismissed from office.

All this signified that the Hinzpeter propaganda of Christian Socialism had at last definitely captured the young Kaiser. Once enlisted, he threw himself with characteristic vehemence of energy into the movement. Events now crowded on each other's heels.

On February 4th William issued his famous brace of rescripts to Bismarck and to the Minister of Commerce, reciting the woes and perils of German industrial classes, and ordaining negotiations with certain European States for a Labour Conference,

"with a view to coming to an understanding about the possibility of complying with the needs and desires of labourers, as manifested by them during the strikes of the last few years and otherwise." "I am resolved," wrote the Emperor, "to lend my hand toward bettering the condition of German working men as far as my solicitude for their welfare is reconcilable with the necessity of enabling German industry to retain its power of competing in the world's market, and thus securing its own existence and that of its labourers. The dwindling of our native industries through any such loss of their foreign markets would deprive not only the masters, but the men, of their bread. . . . The difficulties in the way of improving our working men's condition have their origin in the stress of international competition, and are only to be surmounted, or lessened, by international agreement between those countries which dominate the world's market." Hence he had decided upon summoning an International Labour Conference.

On the evening of the day on which William thus astonished Germany and Europe, he was the principal guest at a dinner given by Bismarck in his palatial residence in the Wilhelmstrasse, and it was noted that he took special pleasure in talking with Dr. Miquel, Chief Burgomaster of Frankfort, to whom he spoke with zeal and at

length upon his desire to promote the welfare and protect the natural rights of the labouring classes. Court gossip was swift to mark Miquel as a coming man, and to draw deductions of its own from the story that Bismarck had, even as the host of an emperor, seemed preoccupied and depressed.

A fortnight of unexampled uncertainty, of contradictory guesses and paradoxical rumours, now kept Berlin, and all Germany for that matter, in anxious suspense. That Bismarck had been confronted with a crisis was evident enough. Day after day he was seen to be holding prolonged conferences with the young Emperor, and the wildest surmises as to the character of these interviews obtained currency. There were stories of stormy scenes, of excited imperial dictation and angry ministerial resistance, which had no value whatever as contributions to the sum of popular information, but which were everywhere eagerly discussed. The weight of Berlin opinion inclined toward the theory that Bismarck would in the end submit. He had never in his life shown any disposition to make sacrifices for political consistency, and it was assumed that, once his personal objections were overcome, he would not at all mind adapting his political position to the new order of things. This view was, of course, based upon the idea that the Kaiser really desired

to retain Bismarck in office; the loosest German imagination did not conceive the actual truth: to wit, that the Chancellor's retirement had been decided upon, and was the one end at which all these mystifying moves and counter-moves aimed.

The preparations for the Conference went on, meanwhile. A new Council of State for Prussia was founded, to have charge of the general social and fiscal reforms contemplated. The public noted that chief among the names gazetted were those of Dr. Hinzpeter and Count Douglas, and these were given such associates as Herr Krupp, of Essen; Prince Pless, a great Silesian mine-owner; Baron von Stumm, another large employer; and Baron von Hüne, a leading Catholic and important landed proprietor. These were new strong names, altogether out of the old Bismarckian official rut, and their significance was emphasized by the Emperor's selection of Dr. Miquel as reporter of the Council. People recognized that events were being shaped at last from the royal palace instead of the Chancellery.

In the very middle of this period of political suspense came the elections for the new Reichstag. Never before had Germany seen such a lamb-like and sweet-tempered electoral campaign. Three years before Bismarck had literally moved heaven and earth to wrest a majority from the ballot-boxes, for he had induced the Vatican to

formally recommend his nominees to Catholic voters, and had gone far beyond the bounds of diplomatic safety in his famous "*sturm und drang*" speech, threatening nothing less than war if a hostile Reichstag should be elected. But this time he preserved an obstinate and ominous silence. Nothing could tempt him to say a word in favour of any candidate.

Under the double influence of the Kaiser's enthusiastic new Socialism and the Chancellor's grim seclusion, the German electorate knocked the old "Cartel" parties into splinters. The polling results amazed everybody. Of the "Cartel" factions, the National Liberals fell from 94 to 39, the Conservatives from 78 to 66, and the Imperialists from 37 to 20. On the other hand, the *Freisinnigen* rose from 35 to 80, and the Socialists from 11 to 37. Equally interesting was the fact that for the first time the German imperial idea had made an impression on the Alsacian mind, and from sending a solid delegation of 15 dissentients, the two conquered provinces now elected 5 who accepted the situation.

Allusion has heretofore been made to Bismarck's recent declaration that the Kaiser took up the whole Social-reform policy solely as a political dodge. If we could accept this theory, it would be of distinct interest to know what

William thought of his bargain, after the returns were all in. The stupendous triumph of the dreaded Socialists and hated *Freisinnigen* must have indeed been a bitter mouthful to the proud young Hohenzollern. But he swallowed it manfully, and the results have been the reverse of harmful. No parliamentary session of the year, anywhere in the world, was more businesslike, dignified, and patriotic than that of the new Reichstag at Berlin.

But at the outset this political earthquake threw William into a great state of excitement. One might almost say that the electrical disturbances which ushered in the convulsion affected the young man's mind, for he did perhaps his most eccentric action on election day. While the voters of Berlin were going to the polls at noon, on this 20th of February, the Kaiser suddenly "alarmed" the entire garrison of the capital, and sent the whole surprised force, cavalry, artillery, baggage trains and foot, rattling and scurrying through the streets of the capital at their utmost speed. It turned out to be nothing more serious than an abrupt freak of the Kaiser to utilize the fine weather for a drill on the Tempelhof. At least that was the explanation given: but the spectacle produced a sinister impression at the time, and there are still those who believe it to have been intended to influence and overawe the voters.

No doubt consciousness of the gravity of the quarrel with Bismarck, which the Kaiser and his new friends saw now must come swiftly to a point, contributed with the unexpected election results to temporarily unsettle William's nerves. For a week or so, during this momentous period, there were actual fears lest his mental balance should break down under the strain. Fortunately the excited tension relaxed itself in good time, and there has since been no recurrence of the symptoms which then caused genuine alarm.

It was at the culmination of this unsettled period that William made his celebrated speech to the Brandenburg Diet. The occasion was the session dinner, March 5th, and those present noted that the Kaiser's manner was unwontedly *distrait* and abstracted. His words curiously reflected his mood—half poetic, half pugilistic. He began by a tender reference to the way in which the Brandenburgers had through evil and joyous days alike stood at the back of the Hohenzollerns. With a gloomy sigh he added: "It is in the hour of need that one comes to know his true friends." After an abrupt reference to a joke which had recently been made about him as the *reisende*, or Travelling, Kaiser, and a pedagogic injunction to his hearers to by all means travel as much in foreign lands as they could, he drifted into a lofty and beautiful description of the spiritualizing

effects his recent sea voyages had had upon him. Standing alone on the great deck at night, he said, communing with the vast starry firmament, he had been able to look beyond politics and to realize the magnitude and tremendous responsibilities of the position he held. He had returned with a new and more exalted resolve to rule mercifully and well under God's providence, and to benefit all his people. Then there came a sudden anti-climax to this graceful and captivating rhetoric. "All who will assist me in my great task," he called out, throwing a lion's glance over the tables, "I shall heartily welcome; but those who attempt to oppose me I will dash to pieces!"

The reporters were so frightened at these menacing words that they toned them down in their accounts of the speech; but the Kaiser with his own hand restored the original expression in the report of the official *Reichsanzeiger*. Naturally the phrase created a painful sensation throughout Germany. Everybody leaped to the conclusion that the threat was levelled at the Socialist and Radical leaders in particular, and the new Reichstag in general. But within a fortnight the astonished world learned that it was Bismarck who was to be dashed to pieces.

The time has not yet arrived for a detailed account of the circumstances surrounding

Bismarck's actual fall. We have been able to trace clearly enough the progression of causes and changes which led up to that fall. Of the event itself a great deal has been printed, but extremely little is known. The reason for this is simple. The Kaiser and his present friends are possessed with the rigid Prussian military sense of the duty of absolute silence about official secrets. Prince Bismarck has insisted vehemently upon the necessity of this quality in other people, yet has not always distinguished himself by respecting its demands. In his surprising latter-day garrulity, it is easy to believe that he would tell the story about which the others preserve so strict a reticence, if it were not that the story involves his own cruel personal humiliation.

Throughout the trying crisis William never lost sight of the proud and historic reputation of the man with whom he had to deal, or of the great personal reverence and affection which he, as a young King, owed to this giant among European statesmen, this most illustrious of the servants of his dynasty, this true creator of the new German Empire. Every step of the Emperor during the whole affair is marked with delicate courtesy and the most painstaking anxiety to avoid giving the doomed Chancellor unnecessary pain. Although it was entirely settled in the more intimate palace counsels at the end of 1889 that the Prince was

to be retired from office, William sent him the following New Year's greeting, than which nothing could be more cordial or kindly:

"In view of the impending change from one year to another, I send you, dear Prince, my heartiest and warmest congratulations. I look back on the expiring year, in which it was vouchsafed to us not only to preserve to our dear Fatherland external peace, but also to strengthen the pledges of its maintenance, with sincere gratitude to God. It is to me also a matter for deep satisfaction that, with the trusty aid of the Reichstag, we have secured the law establishing old age and indigence assurance, and thus taken a considerable forward step toward the realization of that solicitude for the welfare of the working classes which I have so wholly at heart. I know well how large a share of this success is due to your self-sacrificing and creative energy, and I pray God that He may for many more years grant me the benefit of your approved and trusted counsel in my difficult and responsible post as ruler.

"WILHELM.

"BERLIN, *Dec.* 31, 1889."

A few days later came the death of the venerable Empress Augusta, and William wrote again to Bismarck at Friedrichsruh, affectionately enjoining him not to endanger his health by trying to make the winter journey to Berlin for the funeral.

This friendly attitude was, to the Kaiser's mind, entirely compatible with the decision that a new Chancellor was needed to carry on the enlightened programme of the new reign. But Bismarck stubbornly refused to recognize this. When his obstinacy made peremptory measures necessary, he had even the bad taste to instance these recent amiable messages as proofs of the duplicity with which he had been treated.

The best authenticated story in Berlin, of all the legion grown up about this historic episode, is

to the effect that one afternoon, in the course of an interview between Kaiser and Chancellor on the approaching Labour Conference, Bismarck was incautious enough to use the old familiar threat of resignation with which he had been wont to terrify and subdue the first Kaiser. Young William said nothing, but two or three hours later an imperial *aide-de-camp* appeared at the Foreign Office in Wilhelmstrasse with the statement that he had come for that resignation. Bismarck, flushed and shaken, sent an evasive reply. The *aide-de-camp* came again, with a reiterated demand. Bismarck stammered out that he had not had the time to write it as yet, but that he would himself wait upon the Emperor with it the next day. He made this visit to the Schloss, prepared to urge with all the powers at his command, in the stress of a personal appeal, that the demand be reconsidered. But at the palace he was met with that equivalent for the housemaid's transparent "Not at home" which is used in the halls of kings; and on his return to Wilhelmstrasse he found the inexorable *aide-de-camp* once more waiting for the resignation. Then only, in bitter mortification and wrath, did Bismarck write out his own official death-warrant, which a few days later was to be followed by his son Herbert's resignation.

The widely circulated report that, in his ex-

tremity, the Chancellor appealed for aid to the Empress Frederic, seems to be apocryphal. It is certain, however, that he did, during the twenty-four hours in which that stolidly-waiting *aide-de-camp* darkened his life, make strenous efforts in other almost equally unlikely and hostile quarters to save himself. They availed nothing save to reveal in some dim fashion to his racked and despairing mind how deeply and implacably he was hated by the officials and magnates all about him. But to the general public, astonished and bewildered at this sudden necessity to imagine a Germany without Bismarck, the glamour about his name was still dazzling. When it came their turn to act, they made the fallen Chancellor's departure from Berlin a great popular demonstration. It is well that they did so. With all his faults, Bismarck was *the* chief German of his generation, and the spectacle of cold-blooded desertion which the official and journalistic classes of Berlin presented in their attitude toward him upon the instant of his tumble, offended human nature. Nothing could be more true than that he himself was responsible for this attitude. It was the only possible harvest to be expected from his sowing. He had done his best to make all preferment and power in Germany depend upon callous treachery and the calculation of self-interest. He had contemptuously thrust ideals and generous aspirations

out of the domain of practical politics. He had systematically accustomed the German mind to the rule of force and cunning, to the savage crushing of political opponents, and the shameless use of slander and scandal as political weapons. That this official mind of his own moulding, inured to sacrificial horrors, familiar with the spectacle of statesmen destroyed and eminent politicians flung headlong from the "rock of bronze," should have viewed his own prodigious downward crash without pity, was not at all unnatural. But for the credit of Germany with the outside world it is fortunate that the Berliners, as a whole, responded to the pathetic side of the episode.

William's emotional nature was peculiarly stirred by the separation, when it finally came. The *Reichsanzeiger* of March 20th—two days after the final act in the comedy of the unresigned resignation—contained the imperial message granting Prince Bismarck permission to retire. The phraseology of the document was excessively eulogistic of the passing statesman, and no hint of differing opinions was allowed to appear. Bismarck was created Duke of Lauenburg, and given the rank of a Field Marshal.

More eloquent by far, however, than any rhetorical professions of grief in his public proclamations, were the Emperor's statements to personal

friends of the distress he suffered at seeing Bismarck depart. The ordeal was rendered none the less painful by the fact that it had been foreseen for months, or by the consideration that it was really unavoidable. On the 22nd William wrote to an intimate, in response to a message of sympathy:

"Many thanks for your kindly letter. I have, indeed, gone through bitter experiences, and have passed many painful hours. My heart is as sorrowful as if I had again lost my grandfather. But it is so ordered for me by God, and it must be borne, even if I should sink under the burden. The post of officer of the watch on the Ship of State has devolved upon me. Her course remains the same. So now full steam ahead!"

CHAPTER XI.

A YEAR WITHOUT BISMARCK.

THE first and most obvious thing to be said of the twelvemonth during which the Ship of State has sailed with no Bismarck at the helm, is that the course has been one of novel smoothness. Since the foundation of the Empire Germany has not known such another tranquil and comfortable period. Nothing has arisen calculated to make men regret the ex-Chancellor's retirement. Almost every month has contributed some new warrant for the now practically unanimous sense of satisfaction in his being out of office. When astounded Germany first grasped the fact of his downfall, even those whose hatred of him was most implacable could not dissemble their nervousness lest Germany should be the sufferer in some way by it. He had so persistently kept before the

mind of the nation that they were surrounded by vindictive armed enemies; he had year after year so industriously beaten the war drum and predicted the speedy breaking of the storm-clouds if his own way were denied him; he had so accustomed everybody to the idea that he was personally responsible for the continued existence from day to day of the German Empire, the peace of Europe, and almost every other desirable thing, that the mere thought of what would happen now he was actually gone dazed and terrified the public mind.

But lo! nothing whatever happened. The world continued its placid sweep through space without the sign of an interruption. The spring sun rose in the marshes of the Vistula and set behind the fir-clad ridges of the Vosges, just the same as ever. When Germany recovered her breath after the shock, it was to discover that respiration was an easier matter than it had formerly been. It was really a weight which had been lifted from the national breast. The sensation gradually took form as one of great relief, akin to that of filling the lungs to their utmost with the cool morning air after a night of confinement, unrest, and a tainted atmosphere. It is too much to say that apprehension fled at once; the anxious habit of mind still exists in Germany, and, indeed, must continue to exist so long as France and Russia

stand on the map where they do. But a very short space of time served to make clear that Germany was in adroit and capable hands, and that the old-time notion of the impossibility of supporting national life without Bismarck had been the most childish of chimeras. Then little by little the new civility, freedom, and absence of friction which began to mark Parliamentary debates and official administration, attracted notice. The spectacle of a Chancellor who actually assumed the patriotism and personal honour of his political opponents in the Reichstag, who spoke to them like reasonable beings, and who said their views and criticisms would always receive his respectful consideration, was not lost upon the German brain. People found themselves, before long, actively liking the new *régime*.

In reaching this attitude they were greatly helped by Bismarck's own behaviour, after he retired to Friedrichsruh. It does not fall within the purpose of this work to dwell upon the unhappy way in which, during the year, this statesman who was so great has laboured to belittle himself in the eyes of the world. Allusion to it is made here only to append the note that the Kaiser, under extreme provocation, has steadfastly declined to sanction the slightest movement toward reprisals. Although Bismarck has permitted himself to affront authority much more

openly and seriously than Count Harry von Arnim ever did, his threats, his revelations, and his incitements to schism have all been treated with serene indifference. And so, too, we may pass them by, and push on to greater matters.

On May 6th the new Reichstag was opened by a speech from the throne, almost exclusively reflecting the Emperor's absorption in schemes of social reform and progress, and the new Chancellor, Caprivi, laid before Parliament a Trades Law Amendment Act, as a first attempt at embodying these schemes. After a year of deliberation this measure has just been passed, and, unless the Federal Council interposes some wholly unlooked-for obstacles, will come into effect on April 1, 1892. By this law Sunday labour is absolutely forbidden in all industries, save a selected few connected with entertainment and travelling, and the integrity of the great Church festival holidays is also secured. The Federal Council is given the power to supervise and control the maximum hours of labour in such trades as endanger the health of workmen by overwork. Both journeymen and apprentices are to be able to bring suit against their employers for wrongful dismissal. Female labour is forbidden at night, and is given at all times a maximum of eleven hours. Careful restrictions are also placed upon juvenile labour, and after April of 1894 children

under the age of thirteen are not to be employed at all in factories. These reforms, which practically embody the recommendations of the Labour Conference, do little more than bring Germany abreast of England and America. A more extended programme of social reform is promised when the Reichstag meets again next November.

But it is not on specific achievements that the tremendous popularity which William has won for himself during the past year is founded. We are by no means within view of the end of the game, but it is already apparent that his greatest strength lies in the certainty and sureness of touch with which he appeals to the inborn German liking for lofty and noble visions of actions. The possibility—probability if you like—that these visions will never get themselves materialized, is not so important as it seems. Socialism in Germany is far more a matter of imagination than of fact. Mr. Baring-Gould quotes an observer of the election phenomena of 1878, to show that "decorous people, dressed in an unexceptionable manner, and even to some extent wearing kid-gloves," went to the polls as Socialists then. This has been still more true of later elections. The element of imaginative men who had themselves little or nothing to complain of, but who dreamed of a vague Social Democracy as an idealized refuge from the harsh, dry bureaucracy and brutal militarism of Bis-

marck's government, played a large and larger part in each successive augmentation of the Socialists' voting strength. For want of a better word we may say that William is a dreamer too. In place of their amorphous Utopia, he throws upon the canvas before the Socialists the splendid fantasy of a beneficent absolutism which shall be also a democracy, in which everybody shall be good to everybody else, and all shall sleep soundly every night, rocked in the consciousness that their Kaiser is looking out for them, to see justice done in every corner, and happiness the law of the land.

It is all fantastic, no doubt, but it *is* generous and elevated and inspiring. Granted the premises of government by dreams, it is a much better dream than any which flames in the weak brains of the miners at Fourmies or in the dwarfed skulls of the Berlin slums. And the Germany which, under the impulse of a chivalrous and ardent young leader, finds itself thrilled now by this apocalyptic picture of ideals realized, and of government by the best that is in men instead of the worst, is certainly a much pleasanter subject for contemplation than that recent Germany which, under Bismarck, sneered at every spiritualizing ambition or thought, and roughly thrust its visionaries into prison or exile.

The chronological record of what remained of 1890 is meagre enough. Caprivi's first quarter in

office was rendered brilliant by the bargain which gave Heligoland to Germany, and discussion over this notable piece of fortune was prolonged until the idleness of the summer solstice withdrew men's minds from politics. William made visits to Scandinavia, first of all, and then to the south shore of England, to Russia, and to Austria. In November the excitement over Dr. Koch's alleged specific for tuberculosis was promptly reflected by the Emperor's interest. He gave personal audience to the eminent microscopist, saying that he felt it his duty to buy the wonderful invention and confer the benefit of it freely upon not only his own people but the world at large. A fortnight later he bestowed upon Dr. Koch the order of the Red Eagle of the first class—a novel innovation upon the rule that there must be regular progression in the inferior degrees of the order.

In the same month William accepted the resignation of Court Chaplain Stoecker, and met Dr. Windhorst in conversation for the first time. The two events are bracketed thus because they have an interesting bearing upon the altered state of the religious question in Germany.

The *Kulturkampf* had already, as we have seen, dwindled greatly under the parliamentary necessities of Bismarck's last years in power. But there had been no reconciliation, and the unjust old quarrel still drew a malignant gash of division through

the political and social relations of the German people. Anti-Semitism in the same way lingered on, powerless for much overt mischief, but serving to keep alive the miserable race dissensions which have wrought such harm in Germany, and lending the apparent sanction of the Court to Berlin's social ostracism of the Jews. William's broadening perceptions grasped now the necessity of putting an end to both these survivals of intolerance. The blatant Stoecker was given the hint to resign and an enlightened clergyman was installed in his place. At a Parliamentary dinner, given by Caprivi on November 25th, to which, according to the new order of things, the leaders in opposition were invited quite as freely as supporters of the Ministry, the Emperor met Dr. Windhorst, the venerable chief of the Ultramontane party. All present noted the exceptional courtesy and attention which William paid to "the Pearl of Meppen," and construed it to signify that the days of anti-Catholic bias were dead and gone. This judgment has been so far justified by events that, when Dr. Windhorst died in the succeeding March, it was said of him that of all his aims he left only the readmission of the Jesuits unaccomplished.

William's speeches during the year marked a distinct advance in the art of oratory, and gave fewer evidences of loose and random thinking

after he rose to his feet than were offered by his earlier harangues. At the swearing-in of the recruits for the Berlin garrison, on November 20th, he delivered a curiously theological address, saying that though the situation abroad was peaceful enough, the soldiers must bear their share with other honest Germans in combating an internal foe, who was only to be overcome by the aid of Christianity. No one could be a good soldier without being a good Christian, and therefore the recruits who took an oath of allegiance to their earthly master, should even more resolve to be true to their heavenly Lord and Saviour.

Ten days later William made a speech of a notably different sort in front of the statue of the Great Elector, the 250th anniversary of whose accession to the throne of Brandenburg fell upon the 1st of December. Reference has heretofore been made to the powerful effect produced upon the young man's mind by reading the story of this ancestor, in preparation for this speech. There was nothing at all in it about loyalty to celestial sovereignties, but it bristled with fervent eulogies of the fighting Hohenzollerns, and was filled with military similes and phraseology. It contained as well the veiled comparison between Schwarzenberg and Bismarck which has been spoken of elsewhere.

Within the week the Kaiser delivered another speech, much longer than the other, and of vastly

closer human interest. It had evidently been thought out with great care, and may unquestionably be described as the most important public deliverance of his reign. When he ascended the throne no one on earth would have hazarded the guess that, at the expiration of three years, William's principal speech would remain one upon the subject of middle education!

The occasion was a special conference convened by him to discuss educational reform in Prussia, and the gathering included not only the most distinguished professors and specialists within the kingdom, but representative men from various other German states. A list of the members would present to the reader the names of half the living Germans who are illustrious in literature and the sciences. The session was opened by the Emperor as presiding officer at Berlin, on December 4th.

It was wholly characteristic of the young man that, having tabled a series of inquiries upon the subject, he should start off with a comprehensive and sustained attack upon the whole *gymnasium*, or higher public school, system of the country. The Conference, having been summoned to examine the possibility of any further improvement upon this system, heard with astonishment its imperial chairman open the proceedings by roundly assailing everything connected with, and typical of, the entire institution.

The importance of the speech can best be grasped by keeping in mind the unique reputation which the Prussian school system has for years enjoyed in the eyes of the world. Its praises have been the burden of whole libraries of books. The amazing succession of victories on the fields of 1870–71 which rendered the Franco-Prussian War so pitifully one-sided a conflict, have been over and over again ascribed to the superior education of the German *gymnasia* even more than to the needle-gun—and this too by French writers among the rest. The Germans are justifiably proud of their wonderful army, but it is probable that a year ago they had an even loftier pride in their schools. The teachers are in themselves an army, and have traditionally exerted an influence, and commanded a measure of public deference, which the pedagogues of other lands know nothing about. It required, therefore, an abnormal degree of moral courage for even an Emperor to stand up in cold blood and make an attack upon the sacred institution of the *gymnasium*. It is even more remarkable that what the young man had to say was so fresh and strong and nervously to the point, that it carried conviction to the minds of a great majority of the scholastic greybeards who heard it.

He began by saying that the *gymnasia* (answering roughly to the Latin schools of England and the grammar-schools or academies of America) had

in their time done good service, but no longer answered the requirements of the nation or the necessities of the time. They produced crammed minds, not virile men; wasting on musty Latin and general classical lore the time which should be devoted to inculcating a knowledge of German language and history—knowledge which was of infinitely more value to a German than all the chronicles of an alien antiquity combined. Had these schools done anything to combat the follies and chimeras of Social Democracy? Alas! the answer must be something worse than a negative—and tell not alone of an urgent duty left undone, but of evil wrought on the other side. He himself had sat on the various forms of a *gymnasium* at Cassel—a very fair sample of that whole class of schools—and he therefore knew all about their ways and methods, and the sooner these were mended the better it would be for every one.

It was undoubtedly true, William went on to admit, that in 1864, 1866, and 1870 the Prussian teachers' work showed to advantage. They had in those past years done a good deal to inculcate, and thus help to fruition, the idea of national unity—and it was safe to say that during that period every one who completed his *gymnasium* course went away after the final examination convinced that the German Empire should be re-established, and crowned by the restoration of

Alsace-Lorraine. But with 1871 this practical process of education came abruptly to an end, although as a matter of fact there was more than ever a need of teaching young Germans the importance of preserving their Empire and its political system intact. The consequence was that certain malignant forces had grown up and developed to a threatening degree, and for this the schools were clearly to blame.

Since 1870, he proceeded, there had been in German education a veritable reign of the philologists. They had been sitting there enthroned in the *gymnasia*, devoting all their attention to stuffing their pupils' skulls with mere book-learning, without even a thought of striving to form their characters aright, or training them for the real needs and trials of practical life. This evil had gone so far that it could go no farther. He knew that it was the custom to describe him as a fanatical foe to the *gymnasium* system. This was not true; only he had an open eye for its defects as well as its merits—of which, unfortunately, there seemed a heavy preponderance of the former.

Chief among these defects, to his mind, was a preposterous partiality for the classics. He submitted to his hearers, as patriots no less than professors, that the basis of this public school education should be German, and the aim kept always in view should be to turn out young

Germans, not young Greeks and Romans. There must be an end to this folly. They must courageously break away from the mediæval and monkish habit of mumbling over much Latin and some Greek, and take to the German language as the basis of their teaching. This remark applied also to history. Thoroughness in German history, both authenticated and legendary, and in its geographical and ethnological connections, should be first of all insisted upon. It was only when they were wholly familiar with the ins and outs of their own house that they could afford the time to moon about in a museum.

"When I was at school at Cassel," said William, "the Great Elector, for instance, was to me only a nebulous personage. As for the Seven Years' War, it lay outside my region of study altogether, and for me history ended with the French Revolution at the close of the last century. The Liberation Wars, all-important as they are for the young German, were not even mentioned, and it was only, thank God! by means of supplementary and most valuable lectures from my private tutor, Dr. Hinzpeter, whom I rejoice now to see before me, that I got to know anything at all about modern history. How is it that so many of our young Germans are seduced from the path of political virtue? How is it that we have so many muddle-headed would-be world-improvers amongst us?

How is it that we all the time hear so much nagging at our own government and so much praise of every other government under the sun? The answer is very easy. It is due to the simple ignorance of all these professional reformers and renovators as to the genesis of modern Germany. They were not taught, the boys of to-day are not taught, to comprehend at all the transition period between the French Revolution and our own time, by the light of which alone can our present questions be understood!"

Not only would the *gymnasia* have to mend their methods, he continued, both as to matter taught and the method of teaching it, but they must also reduce the time burden under which they now crush their pupils. It was cruel and inhuman to compel boys to work so hard at their books that they had no leisure for healthful recreation, and the necessary physical training and development of the body. If he himself, while at Cassel, had not had special opportunities for riding to and fro, and looking about him a little, he would never have got to know at all what the outside world was like. It was this barbarous one-sided and eternal cramming which had already made the nation suffer from a plethora of learned and so-called educated people, the number of whom was now more than the people themselves could bear, or the Empire either. So true it was what Bis-

marck had once said about all this "proletariat of pass-men"—this army of what were called hunger candidates, and of journalists who were also for the most part unsuccessful graduates of the *gymnasia*, was here on their hands, forming a class truly dangerous to society!

The speech contained a great many practical and even technical references to bad ventilation, the curse of near-sightedness, and other details which need no mention here, but which indicated deep interest in, and a very comprehensive grasp of, the entire subject. At the close of the Conference, on December 17th, he made another address, from which we may cull a paragraph as a peroration to this whole curious imperial deliverance upon education. After an apology for having in his previous remarks neglected any reference to religion—upon which his profound belief that his duty as King was to foster religious sentiments and a Christian spirit was as clearly visible to the German people as the noonday light itself—he struck this true *fin de siécle* note as the key to his attitude on the entire subject:

"We find ourselves now, after marking step so long, upon the order of a general forward movement into the new century. My ancestors, with their fingers upon the pulse of time, have ever kept an alert and intelligent lookout upon the promises and threats of the future, and thus have

throughout been able to maintain themselves at the head of whatever movement they resolved to embrace and direct. I believe that I have mastered the aims and impulses of this new spirit which thrills the expiring century. As on the question of social reform, so in this grave matter of the teaching of our young, I have decided to lead, rather than oppose, the working out of these new and progressive tendencies. The maxim of my family, 'To every one his due,' has for its true meaning 'To each what is properly his,' which is a very different thing from 'The same to all.' Thus interpreted the motto governs our position here, and the decisions we have arrived at. Hitherto our course in education has been from Thermopylæ, by Cannæ, up to Rossbach and Vionville. It is my desire to lead the youth of Germany from the starting-point of Sedan and Gravelotte, by Leuthen and Rossbach, back to Mantinea and Thermopylæ, which I hold to be the more excellent way."

The effect of this pronouncement upon the German public was electrical. For years there had been growing up in the popular mind a notion that something was wrong with the *gymnasium*, but no one had had the courage to define, much less proclaim, what the real trouble was. Parents had seen their sons condemned to thirty hours per week in the *gymnasium* (involving an even

greater study time outside), and vaguely marvelled that of these thirty hours ten should be given to Latin and six to Greek, whereas mathematics claimed only four, geography and history combined got only three, German and French had but two each, natural science fluctuated between two and one, and English did not appear at all.[1] But though there was everywhere a nebulous suspicion and dislike of the system, it enjoyed the sacred immunity from attack of a fetich. So wonderful a thing was it held to be, in all printed and spoken speech, that people hardly dared harbour their own skeptical thoughts about it. But when the young Kaiser bluntly announced his conviction that it was all stupid and vicious and harmful, and pledged himself with boldness to sweep away the classical rubbish and put practical modern education in its place, the parents of Germany, to use Herr von Bunsen's phrase, were simply enchanted.

During the five months which have elapsed no miracle has been wrought; the character of the *gymnasia* has not been changed by magic. But it is perfectly understood by everybody that the Kaiser intends having his own way, and being as good as his word. Important steps have already been taken to enforce his views upon the system—notably by a change in the Ministry of Instruction.

[1] See the interesting tabular statement in S. Baring-Gould's "Germany Past and Present," p. 181. London, 1881.

Dr. Gustav von Gossler had held the portfolio for ten years, and was so entrenched in the liking of the great body of professors and teachers that he assumed his position to be perfectly secure. When, in the summer of 1889, the young Emperor despatched to him a long memorandum on the reforms necessary in the higher schools of Prussia, he received it submissively, even sympathetically, put it in a pigeon-hole, and went on in the same old dry-as-dust classical rut. William said nothing more, but eighteen months later, when he summoned the Educational Conference, he simultaneously published the text of the memorandum of the previous year. Even then Gossler seems to have suspected no danger, and made an official speech at the opening of the session full of amiable and confident commonplaces. On the following New Year's Day, however—January 1st, of the present year—a peremptory warning came to him in the form of a gift from the palace. It was a handsomely framed photograph of William II, and above the dashing signature were written the significant words, "*Sic volo, sic jubeo.*" It is not strange that shortly thereafter the retirement of von Gossler was announced.

His successor, Count Zedlitz-Trütschler, although beginning his career in the army, long ago revealed abilities which suggested his being drafted off into civil work. He has sat in the

Reichstag as a Free Conservative, has been Governor of Silesia, and is both an excellent speaker and a man of great tact and resource. Among the reforms which he has already seen his way to enforce is one by which the students of the *gymnasia* report the number of hours out of school in which they are compelled to study to keep up with their lessons—these reports serving as a basis for the monthly rearrangement of tasks in such a way as to leave enough time for recreation. The study of German and other modern tongues has also largely displaced the classical curriculum in the three lower classes of the *gymnasia.* Count Zedlitz is the Minister, moreover, having to deal with ecclesiastical affairs, and his sympathies are all upon the side of toleration and of a good understanding with the Vatican.

On this same New Year's Day William sent a photograph also to the venerable Postmaster-General, Herr von Stephan, bearing a written legend not less characteristic than the other. It ran thus: "Intercommunication is the sign under which the world stands at the close of the present century. The barriers separating nations are thereby overthrown, and new relations established between them." Upon the sentiment thus expressed much of great importance to Germany and to Europe depends.

Brief as has been the career of the present German Empire among nations, its history already covers one very remarkable and complete *volte face* on economic subjects, and the beginnings of what promises to be a second and almost as sweeping change. Up to 1876, with Delbrück as President of the Chancellery and Camphausen as Minister of Finance, Germany stood for as liberal a spirit of international trade relations as at least any other nation on the Continent. But in that year Bismarck, by a combination of the various Conservative factions which leaned toward high tariffs, inaugurated a Protectionist policy which forced these Ministers out and ranged the German Empire definitely on the other side of the economic wall. To the end of Bismarck's rule, Germany steadily drifted away from Free Trade and toward the ideals of Russia, Thibet, and the Republican party in the United States. But even before Bismarck's fall it became apparent that the young Emperor took broader views on this subject than his Chancellor, and during the past year several important steps have been taken toward bringing Germany forward once more into line with modern conceptions of emancipated trade. A liberal Treaty of Commerce has been signed with Austro-Hungary—the precursor, it is believed, of others with countries now committed to stupid and injurious tariff wars, while at home no secret is made of

the ministerial intention to in time reduce duties on cereals, lumber, and other necessaries, and generally pursue a tariff reform policy. The Reichstag has during the year passed a bill which, beginning in August of 1892, spreads over five years the extinction of the sugar bounties, another great bulwark of the rich protectionist ring. An attack upon the spirit bounties is expected next, while the Upper House of the Prussian Diet has just passed the new Graded Income Tax Bill which is to pave the way to a return from tariff to direct taxation.

The inspiring source of these reforms is Dr. Miquel, whose rise to imperial favour during the labour crisis has been noted, and who succeeded von Scholz as Minister of Finance in June of 1890. He furnishes still another illustration of the debt which German public life owes to the absorption, two centuries ago, of that leaven of Huguenot blood to which reference has heretofore been made—and which has long played in Prussia as disproportionately important a part as the remaining Protestant strain has in the politics of France. Herr Miquel looks like a Frenchman, and his manner, at once polished, genial, and grave, is that of a statesman reared on the Seine rather than the Haase.

In one sense he is scarcely a new man, since he sat in the Prussian Parliament before the days of the Empire, and was years ago regarded as

dividing with Bennigsen the leadership of the National Liberal party. He is in his sixty-third year, and might long since have been a Minister had he not felt it incompatible with his self-respect to take a portfolio under Bismarck's whimsical and arrogant mastership. In this present period of uncertainty in German politics, filled as it is with warring rumours of impending reconciliations and hints of even more deeply embittered quarrels, prophecy is forbidden, but no one on either side attempts a forecast of the future which does not assign to Miquel a predominant part.

His administrative abilities are of a very high order, and he combines with them much breadth of vision and great personal authority. The reliance placed upon him by the Emperor has been a subject of comment, almost from the first meeting of the two men, and German public opinion gives him no rival in influence over the imperial mind. It was at the dinner-table of this Minister last February that William is said to have replied to a long argument by Baron Kardorff in favour of bimetallism: "Personally I am a gold man, and for the rest I leave everything to Miquel."

With the impending retirement of von Maybach, Minister of Public Works and Railways, von Boetticher will be the only remaining Minister of

eleven who held portfolios when William I died in March, 1888. It seems probable that the present year will outlive even this exception. The change in governmental spirit and methods of which Berlin is more and more conscious, is not wholly a matter of new men. The weight of militarism is being lifted. Generals no longer play the part they did in purely civil affairs. Count Waldersee's retirement from his great post as Chief of the General Staff is popularly ascribed to his having attempted to interfere with the amount and distribution of the military budget. Five years ago such an interference would have seemed to everybody the most natural thing in the world. The Emperor, too, grows less fond of obtruding the martial side of his training and temperament. From a beginning in which he seemed to think that Germany existed principally for the purpose of supporting an army, he has grown to see the true proportion of things and to give military matters hardly more than their legitimate share of his attention. The death of Moltke has removed the last great soldier who could speak authoritatively for the army in the Reichstag. In that sense at least he has left no heir.

In the more troubled domain of foreign affairs, the year without Bismarck has been marked by fewer visible changes. We are well along into "a year without Crispi," also, but the Triple Alliance,

if less demonstrative in its professions of mutual affection and pride than formerly, seems no whit diminished in substantial unity. At the moment, peace appears to be as secure as it has been during any year since 1880,—which is another way of saying that the weight of force and determination is still on the side of the Triple Alliance.

There has been during the twelvemonth only one sensational incident to mar the polite, business-like relations which Caprivi maintains with the nations of the earth. The unfortunate incidents attending the visit in February of the Empress Frederic to Paris, are too fresh in the public memory to call for recapitulation here. It seems fair to say that it is not easy to imagine so pacific and sensible an ending to such a stormy episode having been arrived at in the days of Bismarck. The young Kaiser, whom Europe thought of as a firebrand when he ascended the throne, kept his temper, or at least prevented its making a mark upon the policy of his government, in a striking manner. He had just gone out of his way to conciliate French feeling by writing a graceful message of condolence upon the death of Meissonier. The foolish insults to his mother, with which this act of courtesy was answered by the Parisian rabble, failed to provoke any retort in kind. Indeed, when it was represented to him that the increased rigour of passport regulations in

Alsace-Lorraine was being construed as a reprisal, he issued orders to modify this rigour.

With this exhibition of judicious restraint, which rises to the full measure of the vast responsibilities and anxious necessities of his position, our chronological record of William's three-years' reign may be fittingly brought to a close. The added narrative which is held in store for us by the future may be tempestuous and discoloured by fire and blood; far better, it may be a gentle story of increasing wisdom, of good deeds done and peace made a natural state instead of an emergency in the minds of men. But whichever betides, we have seen enough to feel that it will be the chronicle of a real man, active, self-centred, eager to achieve and resolute to act, of high temper and great ambitions, and who has been given such a chance by the fates to help or hurt his fellow-mortals as perhaps no other young man ever had.

In a concluding chapter some notice may properly be taken of the personal attributes of William, and of his daily walk and talk as a human being as well as a Kaiser.

CHAPTER XII.

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS.

In the matter of personal appearance there are two quite distinct and different Williams. Those who see the young German Emperor on a State occasion think of him as almost a tall man, with a stern, thoughtful face and the most distinguished bearing of any sovereign in Europe. He holds himself with arrow-like straightness, bears his uniform or robes with proud grace, and draws his features into a kind of mask of imperial dignity and reserved wisdom and strength very impressive to the beholder. It is with what may be called this official countenance of William's that the general public is chiefly familiar, for he assumes it in front of the photographer's camera, just as he does on parade, at formal gatherings, and even in his carriage when he drives through the streets.

There is nothing to cavil at in this. One of the most important functions of an Emperor must surely be to look like an Emperor.

But in private life, when the absence of ceremonial and the presence of none but friends permit him to unbend, we see quite another William. He does not now give the impression of being a tall man, and his face wears a softened and kindly expression prone to break into an extremely sweet and winning smile. When this smiling mood is upon him he looks curiously like his uncle, the Duke of Connaught, although at other times the resemblance is not apparent. As a boy he was very white-skinned, with pale flaxen hair. Years of military outdoor life burned his face to a tawny brown, through which of late an unhealthy pallor, the product of overwork and sleeplessness, at times shows itself. His hair is of average darkness, but his small and habitually curled moustache is of a light yellowish colour.

An observer who studied him closely during a whole day when he visited Russia three years ago describes him at the first morning review of troops as carrying himself almost pompously erect, and wearing a countenance of such gloomy severity that everybody was afraid to approach him, so that the officers who saw him for the first time jokingly whispered to one another that a new William the Taciturn had come into being. But

in the afternoon, when the Czarina presided over a little garden party, limited almost to the circle of royalty, William appeared in a straw hat and jaunty holiday costume, smoked cigarettes continuously, and laughed and chatted with everybody as gaily and affably as any little bank bookkeeper snatching an unaccustomed day in the country.

The dominant feature of his make-up is a restless and tireless physical energy. In this he is perhaps more English than German. The insular tendency of his out-of-door tastes is very marked. Probably there is no gentleman on the Continent who keeps a keener or more interested watch upon the details of English sport, year by year, than William does. Oxford will not soon forget his characteristic telegram to Max Müller, recently, congratulating the University crew upon their victory in the annual race, and every British yachtsman looks forward to this season's regatta at Cowes with added interest, from the fact that the Emperor intends personally competing with his newly-purchased yacht.

William rides like an Englishman—which is another way of saying that he cuts a better figure in the saddle than most of the other Hohenzollerns, notoriously bad horsemen as a rule, have done. He has all the British passion for the sea and matters maritime. In his speech to the

officers of the English fleet at Athens he said that his interest in their navy dated from the earliest days of his boyhood, when he played about Portsmouth dockyard and gained impressions of the vastness and splendour of British shipping which had vividly coloured his imagination for all time. No other German ruler has ever given so much thought to naval matters, and it is his openly-expressed ambition to give the Empire during his reign a fighting fleet which shall rank among the great navies of the world. During the debates in the Reichstag last March on the excessive naval estimates, he sent to the chairman of that special budget committee a copy of an old painting representing the fleet of the Great Elector, with footnotes in his own imperial hand giving the names and armaments of the various vessels, and bearing the inscription: "To Herr von Koscielski, in remembrance of his manly advocacy of my navy, from his grateful Emperor and King."

William's love of exercise for its own sake is truly English. He fences admirably, is a skilful boatman, swims and bowls well and with zest, and delights in mountain climbing. No other Prussian Prince has ever been so fond of shooting. Hohenzollern notions of this particular sport have for generations been a matter for derision among Englishmen. Even Carlyle, who will hardly be

(*From a photograph by* SELLE & KUNTZE, *Potsdam.*)

WILLIAM II. IN HUNTING COSTUME.

described as a sportsman, was alive to the grotesque features of the *Parforce Jagd*, that curious institution in the Potsdam Green Forest which owes its origin to Frederic William I. The *Saugarten* is still there, and young boars, bred in captivity and bereft of their tusks at a tender age, are still released from their pens when the first frosts of autumn fall, and after a start of a few minutes are chased by mounted and gaily caparisoned parties of huntsmen—for all the world like the tame lion hunts of the Sardanapalian decadence pictured for us by the Assyrian palace friezes. But William has never shown much admiration for this pet diversion of the Potsdam officers. His own tastes are for the most laborious and difficult forms of woodland sport, and he is an exceptionally good shot.

What renders all this the more remarkable is the fact that his left arm is practically paralyzed. He has trained himself to hold the rein with it when he rides, but that is the sum of its usefulness. This defect dates from the occasion of his birth, and is ascribed to the ignorance or ineptitude of a physician. The arm is four inches shorter than its fellow, and has a malformed hand with only rudimentary fingers. The arm is so wholly limp that William has to lift its hand to even place it on the hilt of his sword with his right hand. It is in this posture, or else in the

breast of his coat, that he customarily carries it when out of the saddle. All his photographs show it thus disposed of. At the table he has a combined knife and fork, which slide into each other. He uses this with much dexterity, first to cut up his meat and then to eat it, all of course with one hand.

To have become a skilled marksman under such a weighty disadvantage indicates great patience and determination. William uses a very light English gun, having abandoned in despair the attempt to get any made to his liking in Germany, and carries it on his shoulder with the stock behind him. At the proper moment he brings the weapon forward by a movement of his right arm, with incredible swiftness and deadly accuracy of aim.

Of much graver importance, of course, is the internal inflammation of the ear, formerly complicated at times with an acute earache, with which he has now been afflicted for a number of years. Just what the affection is no one has yet been able to determine. It grows worse in cold and wet weather, and that is about all that is known of it. The physicians disagree as to its character. William himself, though occasionally suffering grievously from it, has never been alarmed about it, and really believes it to be a local ailment. Its existence naturally enough suffices to create a

certain uneasiness in the minds of his friends, and of Germans generally, and serves as the fruitful source of alarming rumours by which, from time to time, the virtue of Continental bourses is systematically assailed. But no responsible professional man seems to regard it as necessarily dangerous. This year, although the Emperor's appearance shows evident signs of the wear and strain of his great burdens upon his strength and spirits, this particular affection is said to be less troublesome than usual.

Undoubtedly, however, this annoying and wearying burden of the flesh has a great deal to do with William's disposition towards nervous excitability and restlessness. A man with the earache cannot be expected to hold calm mastery over all his moods. It is a reasonable assumption, too, that to this affliction is in some measure due his phenomenal and unseasonable physical activity. Sometimes it happens that he is unable to sleep at all, and he habitually keeps notebooks and pencils within reach of his bedside, upon which to work until the demon of insomnia is exorcised. Upon occasion, for distraction, he routs out the garrison of Berlin, or some regiment of it, before daybreak. In any case he rises at five.

Both at home and when abroad the amount of labour he gets through in a day is almost without parallel. It is a commonplace experience for him

to do four hours' work in his Berlin study in the early morning; then take a train to Potsdam and spend the remainder of the forenoon in reviewing troops; then trot back in the saddle with his staff over the distance of eighteen miles; devote the afternoon to the transaction of business with his Ministers and officials; receive and return the calls of two or three visiting royal personages; then dine somewhere where a speech must be made, and get back to the palace for more work before bedtime.

In Constantinople and the scarcely less Oriental Athens they still recall his energetic daily routine with bewildered astonishment. He was up long before the drowsy muezzins from the minarets summon the faithful at the hour of prayer—rattling indefatigably about to see all the sights, reviewing the Sultan's troops, inspecting all the chief military establishments, War Ministry, military school, artillery barracks, and what not besides, asking questions of everybody who had anything to tell, peering into every nook and cranny with an insatiable curiosity, working through it all upon notes of instruction and reference to be forwarded to Berlin every evening, and then sitting up until all the others were yawning with sleep.

Of course he could not bear the strain of this constant activity if he were not endowed with two great gifts—prodigious physical vitality and

imagination. Mere strength alone, mated with dulness of mind, would be broken down and destroyed by the wear and tear of such a life. William is, physically and mentally, the heir of the best things which European royalty has to offer. He inherits the bodily force and resolution of the Hohenzollerns, the *savoir faire* and comeliness of the Guelphs, the intellectual acuteness and philosophical tastes of the Coburgs, and the romantic mediæval Ascanien strain which Catherine II took to Russia and her granddaughter brought back again to Weimar—a leaven half divine half dæmonic, which swings between genius and madness. The product of these marriages might be expected to be what he is—by far the most striking personality in the whole gallery of contemporary kings.

What other dynasty in Western Europe does not envy William his six handsome, sturdy, and superbly healthy little sons? Seeing them with their shining, bright-eyed faces and ordinary well-worn clothes, one cannot but reflect upon the contrast afforded at Vienna, where the great rival house of Hapsburg is dying miserably out in pallid epileptics and vicious dullards.

These six fine boys, the oldest of whom is now in his tenth year, are reared in the Spartan traditions of the Hohenzollerns. Winter and summer they are up at six o'clock and into their cold tubs

with merciless punctuality. As a rule they breakfast with their father half an hour later, and throughout the meal he talks with them alone. They salute him on entering, and again on leaving, in military fashion; even at this tender age a considerable portion of their education is upon martial subjects. The Emperor, in his recent speech at Bonn, indicated an intention of having the Crown Prince eventually matriculate there, but for the present, as soon as the lads outgrow their private tutors it is understood that they are to go to the great cadet school at Lichterfelde, just outside Berlin. Evidently the *gymnasium* has no part in the plans for their education.

The predominance of the military idea, which envelops even these little baby princes, is indeed the keynote to every phase of their father's character. He is first of all a soldier. He lives a plain and simple life; the service and routine of his palaces are those of an officer's mess. He is a heavy eater, with a preference for homely dishes; he smokes great numbers of light Dutch cigars which cost about three halfpence each. He addresses all persons whom he meets in an official capacity in the terse form and curt, sharp tone of a drill sergeant. Although in private conversation with friends his voice is soft and pleasant, all his public speeches are declaimed in a harsh and rattling voice, with

abruptly ended sentences. His relations with other Germans, from the kings down to the peasants, are, in short, those of a commanding officer on the parade ground. This attitude does not suggest tact, or lend itself to roundabout methods. The bluntly-expressed rescripts to the officers of the army which William from time to time has issued, complaining about the harsh personal treatment of the men, denouncing gambling and extravagant living, and so on, might easily have provoked a spirit of discontent in a country less wholly ruled by the idea of military discipline.

Naturally enough, his innate liking for display and scenic effects is strongly coloured by militarism. He cannot see too many uniforms about him, and he literally inundates Berlin with martial pageants. One might suppose that the effect of this would be to satiate the Berliners, but they maintain a most vigorous and unabated interest in seeing the troops march by, and throng the sidewalks every time as if the spectacle had all the excitement of novelty.

In almost every other country the personal tastes or whims of the sovereign, if he be at all a man of the world, leave a certain mark upon the every-day dress of the people about him. The Prince of Wales, for example, during the quarter century in which he has assumed the social work of his mother's reign, has made a

good many changes in the fashions of men's clothes—changes which have been respected in Melbourne and Washington and Toronto as well as in London. But hardly anybody in Germany has ever seen the adult William in citizen's clothes—and positively no one ever thinks of him save as in uniform.

As William is a soldier in manners and habits, so his conceptions of government and of domestic statecraft are largely those which might be expected in a chief of staff. He addresses his people always as their commander-in-chief. The starting-point of his resolve to get rid of Bismarck and bring in new men like Miquel and Caprivi, was his discovery that the Chancellor and the various political parties and factions which he alternately bullied and cajoled were really so many impediments standing between him and his subjects. The Hohenzollern desired to speak directly to the people, as a general to his army, and he has swept aside whatever stood in the way. Such a posture does not, at first sight, seem to promise much for progress and enlightened development, but it must be remembered that universal service in the army has had the effect of familiarizing all other Germans with this same point of view, so that really sovereign and subjects get on much better together than in many countries nominally more free.

The difficulties of government in Germany are almost wholly social and economic. The Prussian artizan, perforce, spends seven years at school and three years in the army before he seriously takes up his trade and sets to working for himself. He marries early and has a swarm of children, and the necessity of toiling to support all these in an overcrowded and underpaid labour market grinds upon his temper. He has, to begin with, a racial tendency to think highly of himself and to criticize other people; he is afforded only too much justification for his rooted dislike of aristocrats, employers, and rich people generally, who in Germany are much less generous and considerate than in some other countries. Thus he is peculiarly open to the arguments and allurements of the social democratic propaganda.

The Kaiser's idea is to meet and counteract this by appealing to the workman's military recollections and pride. It is difficult for outsiders to realize the potency of this appeal. Americans and Englishmen see the scores of thousands of young Germans who expatriate themselves to escape military service, and assume, therefore, that it must be a hateful thing. To those who look forward to it this may be true. But to the poor German artizan who looks backward upon it this term of service in the army is apt to seem the pleasantest period of his life. By comparison

with the hardships of his later independent struggle for existence, he comes to regard this time when he was fed and clothed and instructed and lodged, and wore a uniform, with affectionate regret.

William, with what seems a sound instinct, lays great stress upon keeping alive and strengthening this army spirit. His wish is so to extend a semi-military organization throughout the social structure that every German may continue to feel that he belongs to the army. To this end he encourages the founding in each village of a *Landwehrbezirksverein*, or military club, where veterans and reservists are invited to come and read the papers over their beer and pipes, take charge of anniversary celebrations, promote local shooting festivals, and keep Social Democrats at a healthful distance. This plan is reported to be working well in small places, but it has not been thus far of much service in cities and factory centres, and in Mainz the attempt has just been abandoned owing to the discovery that all the members had become Social Democrats. But it is important to notice that since William has actively interested himself in the condition of these lower social strata, and sharply rated employers and army officers for harsh treatment of their men, the tone of the Socialists in the Reichstag toward him has been quite as civil as that of the other members.

For a young man descended from such phenomenally thrifty people as the Hohenzollerns and Wettins have always been, William has remarkably lavish, not to say prodigal, notions about money. He was left a very rich man by his father's death, and a complaisant Reichstag shortly thereafter largely increased the amount of his civil list, but for all that prudent Germans shake their heads over the immense schemes of expenditure to which he is already committed. The outlay upon the renovation of the Old Schloss in Berlin, entered upon in the first months of his reign, startled these good souls, but that turned out to be a mere drop in the bucket. The whole park arrangements at Potsdam are to be altered, and the unsightly old Dom—or cathedral—facing the Lustgarten in Berlin, has been torn down to make room for a magnificent ecclesiastical edifice worthy of the German capital. This means a heavy bill of expense, and Berliners hear with mingled emotions that their Royal Opera House is also to come down, to be supplanted by a wonderful new structure rivalling in dimensions and cost the Grand Opera House in Paris.

This last plan reflects the most marked artistic sense discoverable in William. He is passionately fond of the theatre, and has enlightened views about its popular usefulness. In decorating the tragedian, Ludwig Barnay, he has put on record

an act by a Prussian King which not even his grandfather, the old Kaiser, enamoured of all things connected with the stage as he was, could be brought to contemplate. He delighted in the company of players to the end of his days, but he always frowned when the possibility of stars and ribbons was hinted at. William's action, therefore, deserves special notice. It must be admitted that his attitude toward the drama is dictatorial to a degree—very like that which a general might be assumed to occupy toward a band of mummers allowed inside the camp to amuse the soldiers; but the German drama is framed to resist a great deal of pressure to the square inch, and is indeed rather the better for it. Very comical are the stories told in Berlin of the way in which William personally superintended the rehearsals of Wildenbruch's "The New Lord" last winter, criticizing and instructing the actors, and rearranging the distribution of the cast to suit his notions of their several capabilities. The fact that the drama had for its principal incident the Great Elector's dismissal of his father's Minister, Schwarzenberg, doubtless accounted for much of the Emperor's personal solicitude as to its proper presentation. But it is not in William's nature to refrain from meddling and dictating about anything, no matter how trivial, in which his interest is aroused.

The young Kaiser was never what is called a bookish man, and, as has been said before, the tremendous pressure of his daily work now leaves him no time whatever for reading. But he still manages to secure a certain amount of leisure for association with intimate friends, and among these are a number of highly-cultured men. He gets from them what others are obliged to seek in books. His inclinations seem to develop steadily in the direction of respect for intellectual people and products. It is a part of the phenomenon of belated growth which we have traced from his thirtieth birthday; mentally and spiritually cramped up to that time by the despotic influence of the small Bismarckian clique, he had still the strength and ability to expand his mind and character with splendid swiftness when finally the bonds were thrown off. One of the pleasantest features of the Labour Conference gathering in Berlin was the kindly and appreciative way in which William gave his chief attention to the venerable Jules Simon, talked with him intelligently about his works, and presented him with what of all possible gifts he would most prize—some of the manuscript French writings of Frederic the Great. It is more than likely that a twelvemonth before William did not know anything at all about either Jules Simon or his books.

His special liking for the scholarly King of

Sweden, and his annual choice of the sombre solitudes of the Norwegian coast for his summer season of entire rest, are very interesting evidences of this progressive mental elevation. William has a natural tendency to deference and a display of youthful humility toward able men much older than himself, as all who have seen him in the company of his grandfather, Moltke, Windhorst, or Bismarck must have noted, but his attraction toward the learned and gentle Scandinavian monarch is hardly to be put down to that score. Most other princes of William's age, or even much older, devote as little time to King Oscar as politeness will permit, and for choice prefer to spend their holidays at Homburg or Monte Carlo.

No gambling Casino or mere frivolous watering-place so much as knows William by sight. He detests the whole spirit of these princely resorts. He drinks with tolerable freedom at dinner, and is neither a prig nor a prude. But he is distinctly a moral man. People who are close to him aver that he is sincerely religious, and that by no means in a latitudinarian sense. So far as his actions have thrown light on this subject they have indicated a spirit of theological tolerance. In the fourth month of his reign, when the Senior Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church sought to overturn the election of the heterodox

Professor Harnack to the chair of Church History and Dogma at Berlin, William emphatically tossed aside their protest and confirmed the selection of the University. At about the same time he delivered a public rebuke to certain enthusiasts who sought to commit him to an approval of Jew-baiting, and since then, as we have seen, Dr. Stöcker has gone for good. Last winter the Emperor gave a most interesting and characteristic proof of this broad-minded spirit. Two earnestly religious young Germans named Haase and May, belonging to a sect called the New Church, the basis of which is non-resistance, refused on moral grounds to do military service. Their persistence naturally brought them into collision with the courts, and they were sentenced to six weeks' imprisonment. William heard of the case, and, while it would not do to remit the punishment, he issued directions that their stay in prison should be made as comfortable as possible. Upon their release he personally gave the money to pay their passage to America, whither they sailed with the intention of becoming missionaries.

When William ascended the German throne, under such unpleasant and prejudicial conditions, the world thought of him as an ill-conditioned and wildly-reckless young swashbuckler, whose

head would speedily be turned by the intoxicating sense of power, and who would make haste to plunge Europe into war.

Three years of authority have worked such a change in him—or, perhaps better, have brought to the top so many strong and admirable qualities in him which had been dwarfed and obscured by adverse circumstances—that the world has insensibly come to alter its opinion of his character. We think of him no longer as a firebrand. He preserves enough of the eccentricities of a nervous and impetuous individuality, it is true, to still impart to public scrutiny of his words and deeds an element of apprehension. One still instinctively reads the reports of his speeches with an eye cast ahead for wild or thoughtless utterances—and only too often, as in the case of the "salamander" remarks to the Borussian Students' Corps at Bonn the other day, finds what was anticipated. But even in this matter of an over-hasty and unrestrained tongue three years have wrought an important improvement, and in almost all other respects he is unquestionably a better man and a better ruler than the world took it for granted he would be. Doubtless as time goes on we shall come to regard him in a still more altered light.

At present what can be fairly said is that he stands out with clearness from among European sovereigns as a living and genuine personality—

a young man of imagination, of great activity and executive ability, taking gravely serious views of his duties and responsibilities, keenly anxious to do what he believes to be right, and increasingly disposed to look to wise and elevated sources of judgment for suggestions as to what is right.

THE END.

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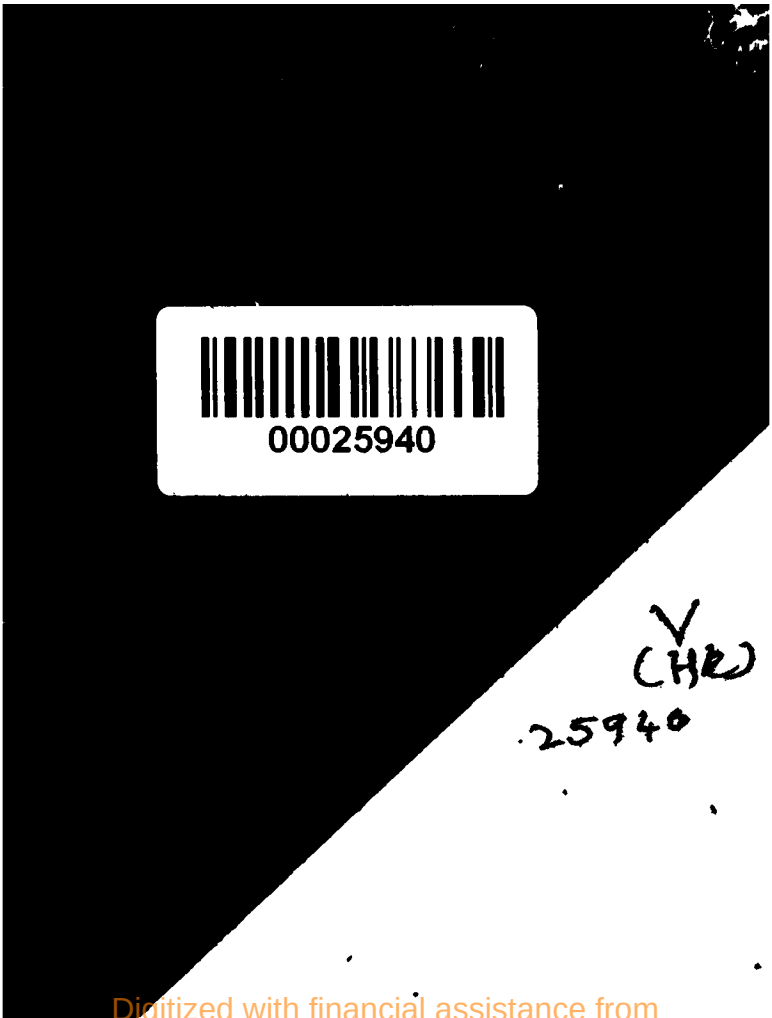

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